

VERTIGO

WILLINGHAM • BUCKINGHAM • LEIALOHA • PEPOY • LEE • LOUGHRIDGE • CHUNG

F A B L E S

Nº 146

HAPPILY EVER
AFTER
PART SIX



THE LAST STORY OF
PRINCE CHARMING

Jan '15
suggested for
mature readers
vertigo.comics.com

THE THOMAS WOLFE SYNDROME

Chapter Six of HAPPILY EVER AFTER

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FAR AWAY...

IT'S BEEN A HUNDRED YEARS SINCE WE'VE SEEN A BLUEBIRD IN THIS LAND.

I THOUGHT MY KIND HAD LONG SINCE ET THEM ALL.

I'M NOT FROM AROUND HERE. AND JUST PASSING THROUGH.

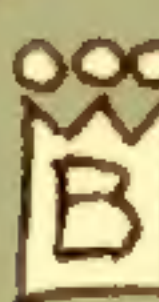
WHERE FROM?

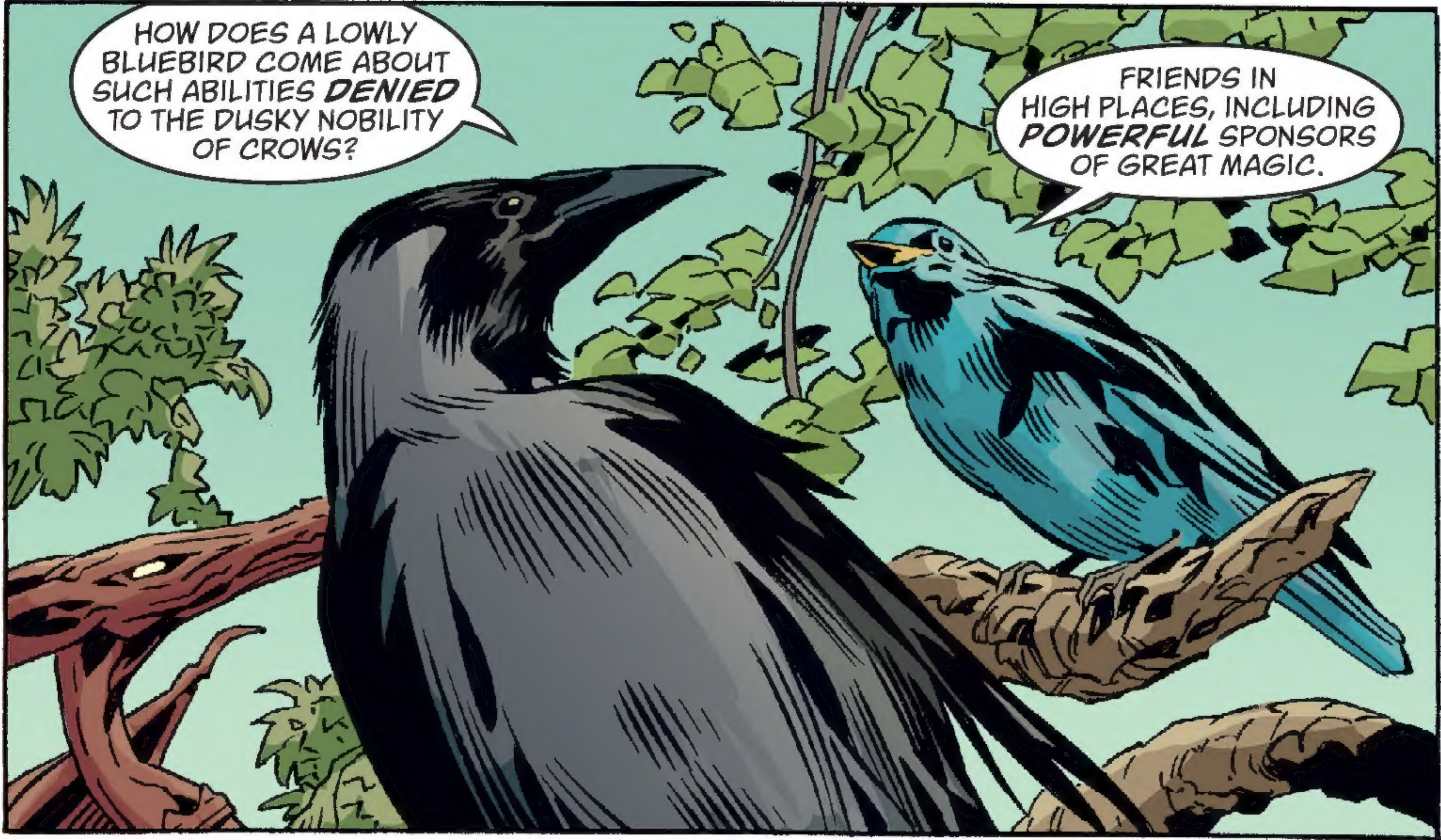
ABOUT A HUNNERT WORLDS THATAWAY, MORE OR LESS.

WHERE YOU BOUND?

ABOUT A SCORE WORLDS THATAWAY, MORE OR LESS.

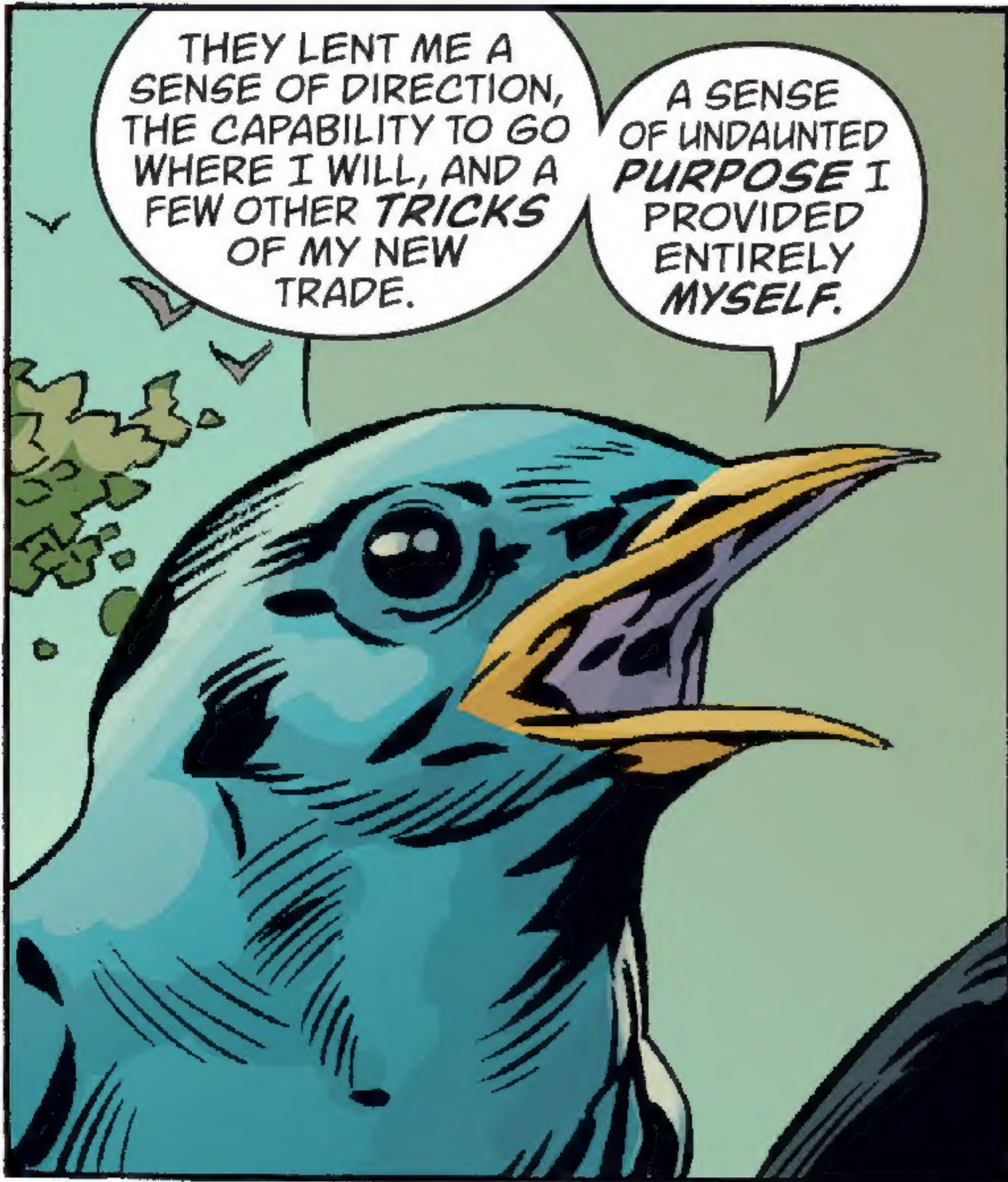
YOU CAN CROSS WORLDS, FROM ONE TO 'NOTHER?





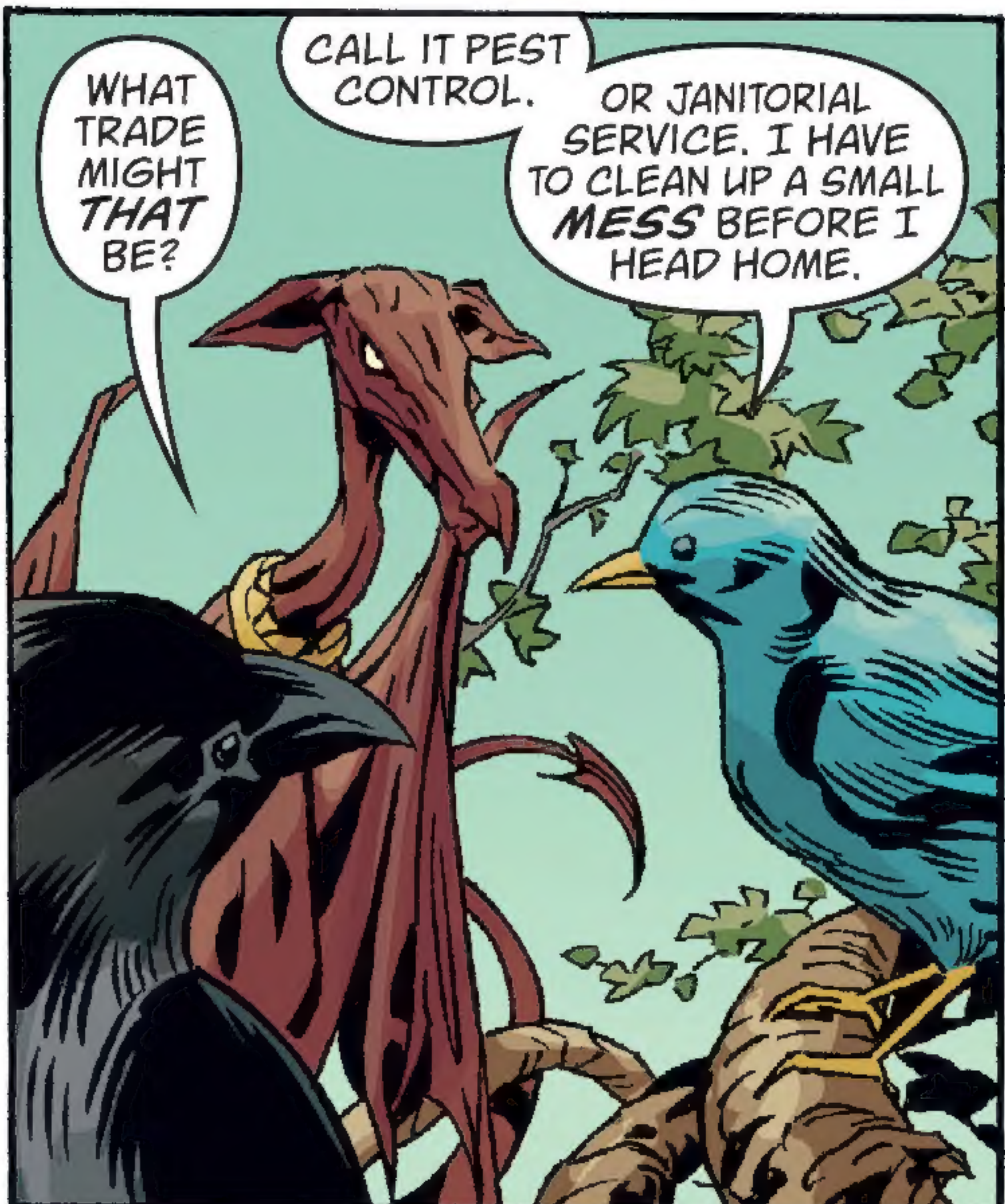
HOW DOES A LOWLY BLUEBIRD COME ABOUT SUCH ABILITIES *DENIED* TO THE DUSKY NOBILITY OF CROWS?

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES, INCLUDING *POWERFUL SPONSORS* OF GREAT MAGIC.



THEY LENT ME A SENSE OF DIRECTION, THE CAPABILITY TO GO WHERE I WILL, AND A FEW OTHER *TRICKS* OF MY NEW TRADE.

A SENSE OF UNDAUNTED *PURPOSE* I PROVIDED ENTIRELY MYSELF.



WHAT TRADE MIGHT *THAT* BE?

CALL IT PEST CONTROL. OR JANITORIAL SERVICE. I HAVE TO CLEAN UP A SMALL *MESS* BEFORE I HEAD HOME.



HOME?

YOU *CAN'T* GO HOME AGAIN.

TOM WOLF SAID THAT.



THE BOOKS OF THOMAS WOLFE ARE AVAILABLE HERE?

BOOKS?

NO.

NO BOOKS. WHAT'S THIS GOT TO DO WITH *BOOKS*?



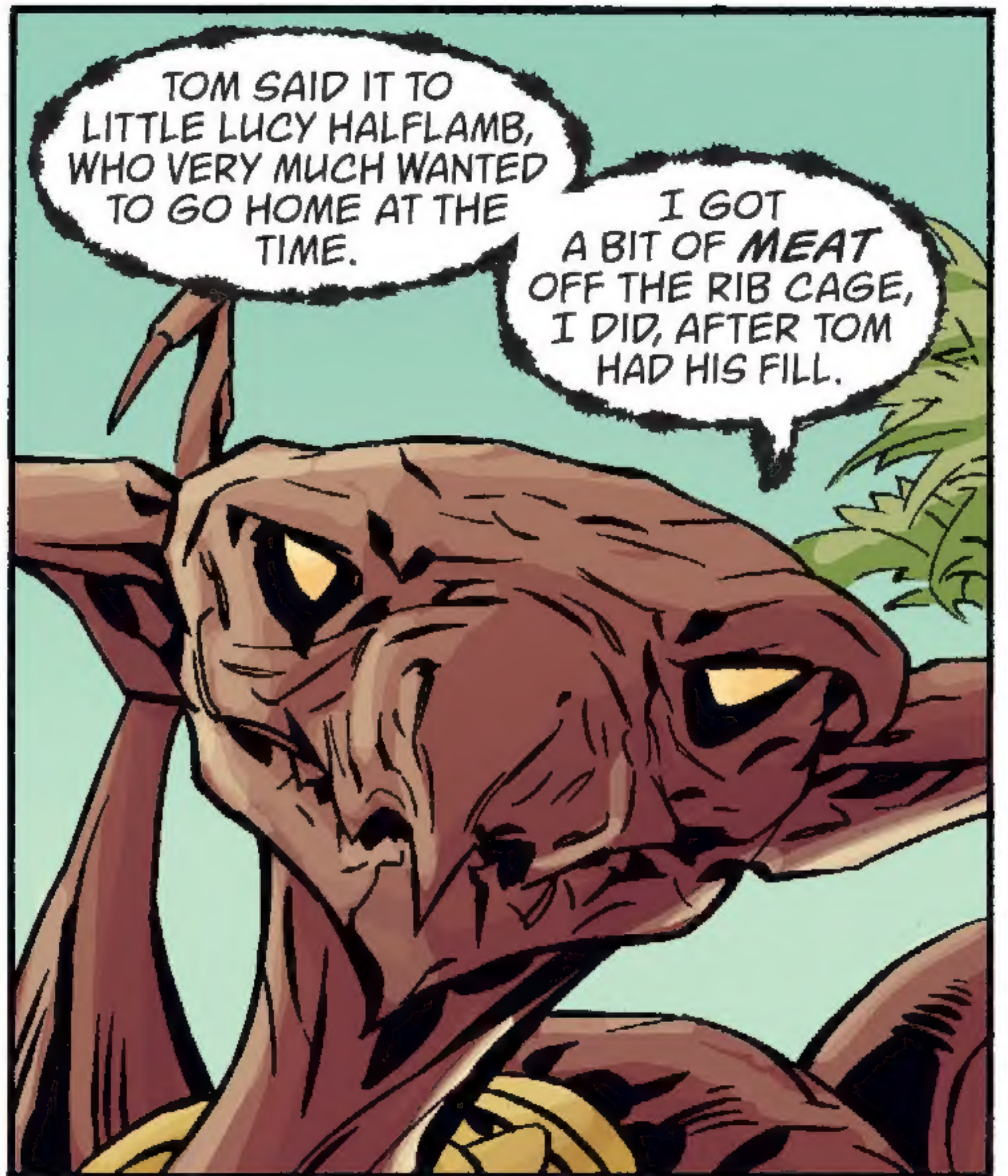


I SAW A BOOK ONCE.

TOM WOLF SAID IT.

THE *WOLF* WHAT LIVES DOWN BY YONDER SCARP OF LIMESTONE. JUST ACROSS THE POND.

TOM.



TOM SAID IT TO LITTLE LUCY HALFLAMB, WHO VERY MUCH WANTED TO GO HOME AT THE TIME.

I GOT A BIT OF *MEAT* OFF THE RIB CAGE, I DID, AFTER TOM HAD HIS FILL.



AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO NOTICED THIS CONVERSATION TOOK A SUDDEN, THOUGH NOT ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED, DARK TURN?

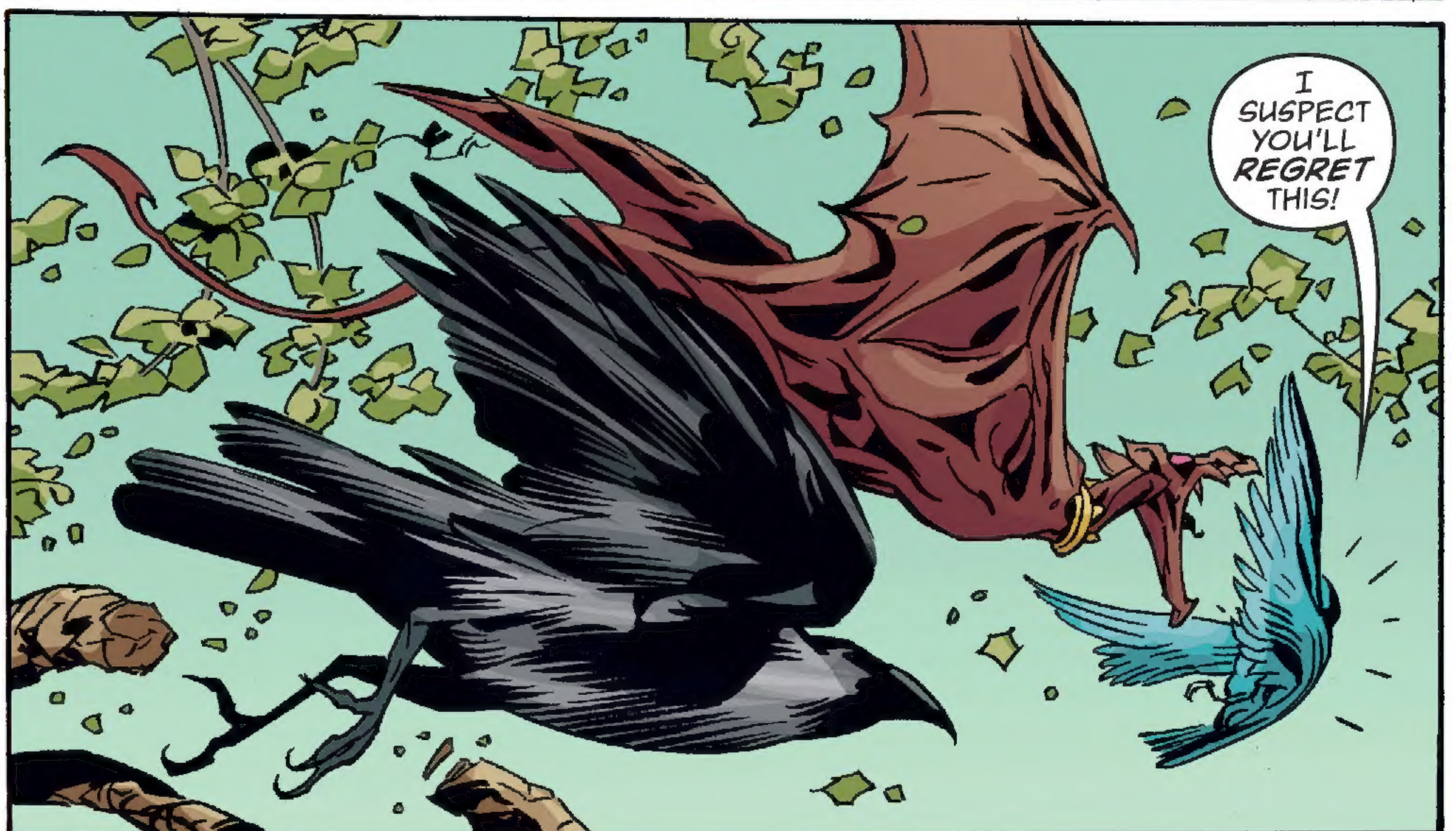
I NEVER TASTED BLUE-BIRD.



BE A SIN OF LOST OPPORTUNITY IF I PASSED UP THE CHANCE TO TRY SOME.

YIKES!

DIBS ON HIS EYES!

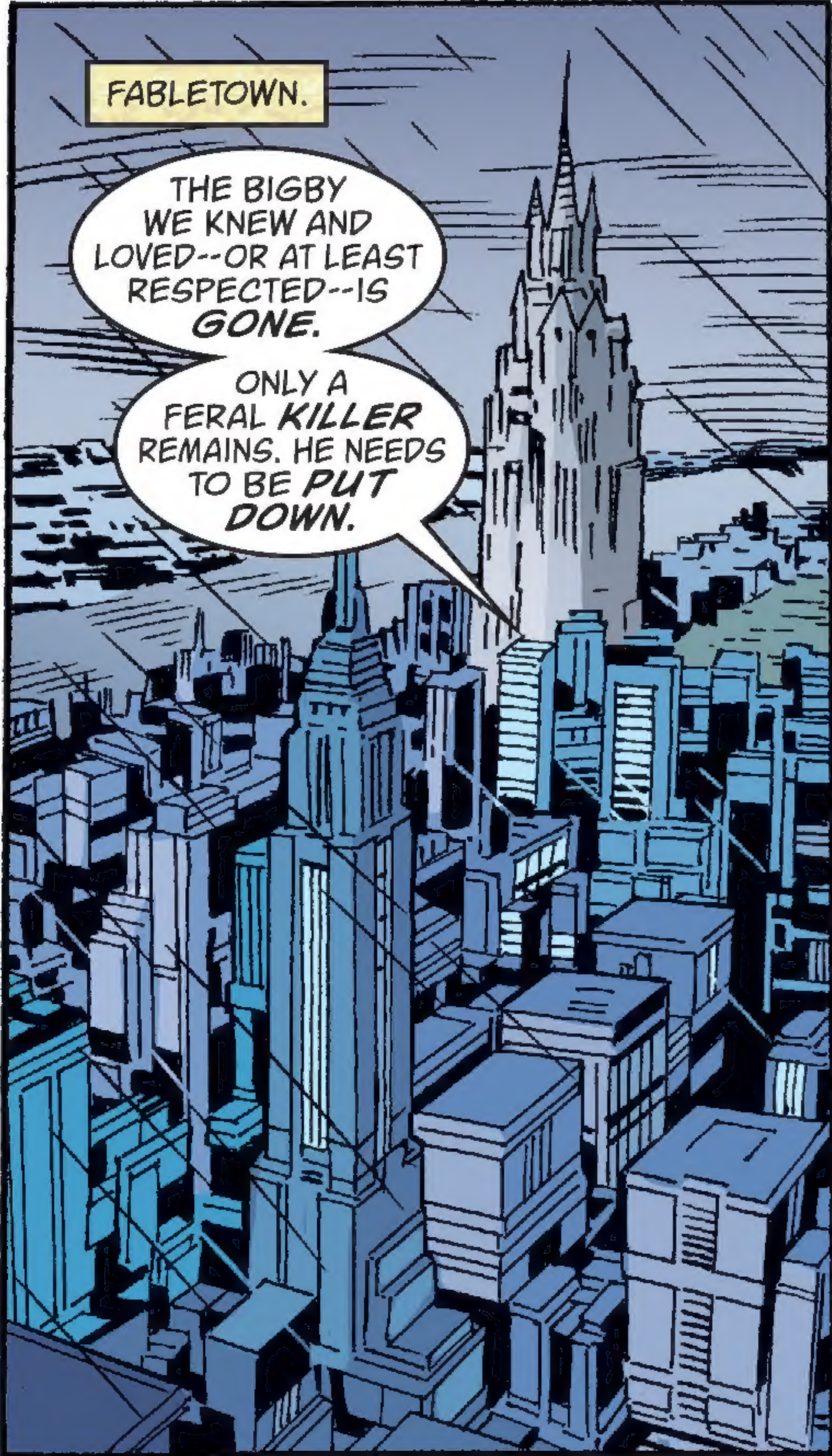


I SUSPECT YOU'LL REGRET THIS!



B

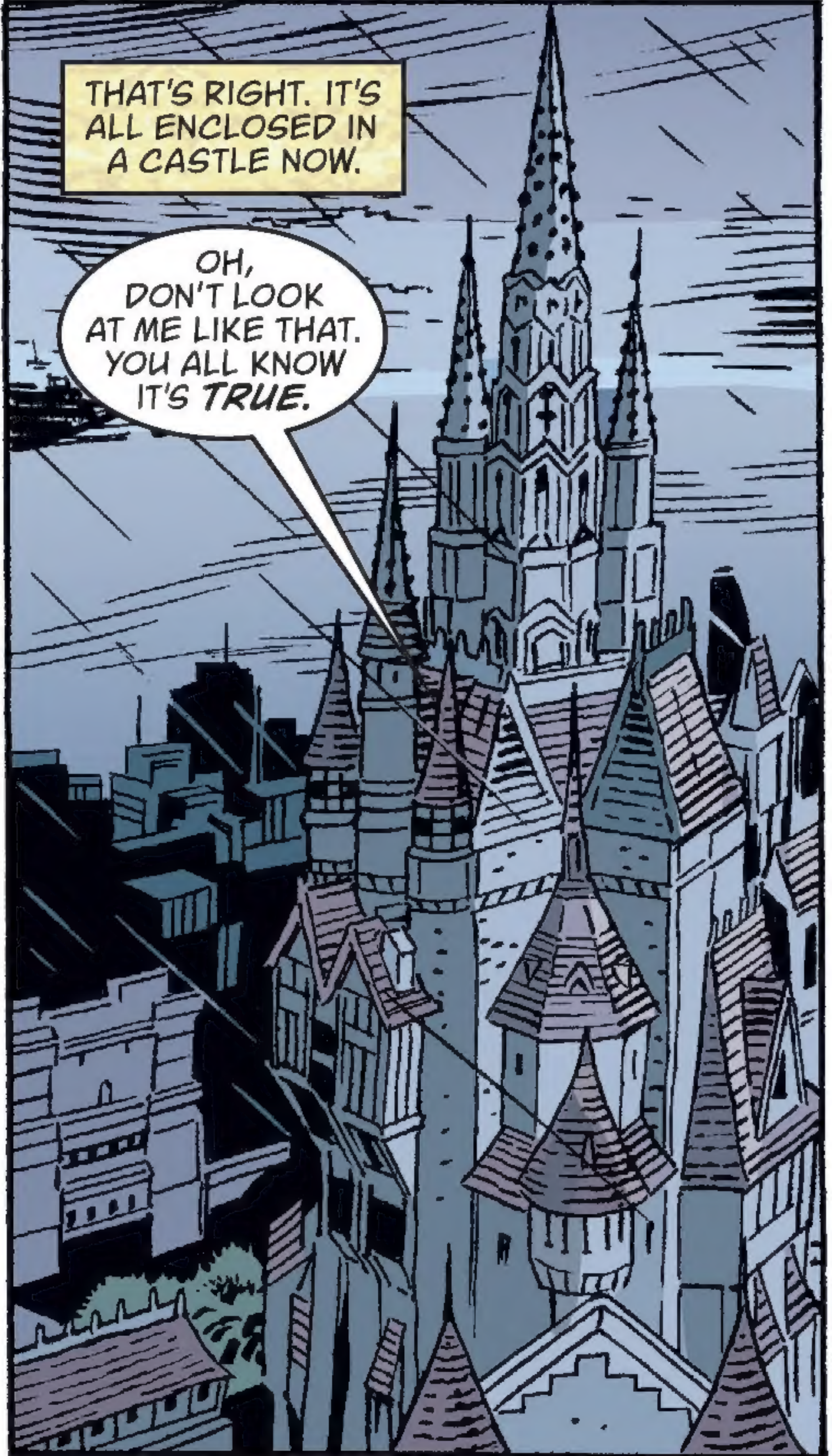
B



FABLETOWN.


THE BIGBY WE KNEW AND LOVED--OR AT LEAST RESPECTED--IS GONE.

ONLY A FERAL KILLER REMAINS. HE NEEDS TO BE PUT DOWN.



THAT'S RIGHT. IT'S ALL ENCLOSED IN A CASTLE NOW.

OH, DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. YOU ALL KNOW IT'S TRUE.



A CASTLE FULL OF MAGIC AND MONSTERS IN THE DARK. BUT WE WON'T DEAL WITH THAT STORY. NOT YET.



THEY'VE A DIFFERENT MONSTER ON THEIR MINDS JUST NOW.

"AS MAYOR, I'VE NO CHOICE BUT TO OFFICIALLY DECLARE BIGBY WOLF AN ENEMY OF FABLETOWN, TO BE DESTROYED BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY."

ROSE RED?

AS THE LEADER OF THE FARM AND QUEEN--OR KING--OF NEW CAMELOT, I JOIN OUR MAYOR IN HIS DECLARATION. WITH REGRETS, BIGBY MUST *DIE*.

THE 13TH FLOOR GROUP CONCURS.

ASSUMING IT'S EVEN POSSIBLE TO KILL HIM NOW.

IS NO ONE GOING TO SPEAK FOR *MERCY*? I THOUGHT THAT WAS ROSE RED'S ENTIRE PURPOSE NOW.

OR ARE SECOND AND THIRD AND FOURTH CHANCES IN VOGUE ONLY WHEN THEY'RE GRANTED VIA THIS SELF-APPOINTED QUEEN'S PASSING *WHIMS*?



LEIGH?

MISS DUGLAS? WHAT ARE YOU--?

WHIMS?



YOU ACCUSE ME OF RULING BY WHIMS, YOU INSIPID CU--

CONTRARIAN!

I BELIEVE THAT WAS THE WORD MY IMPASSIONED QUEEN WAS ABOUT TO USE.



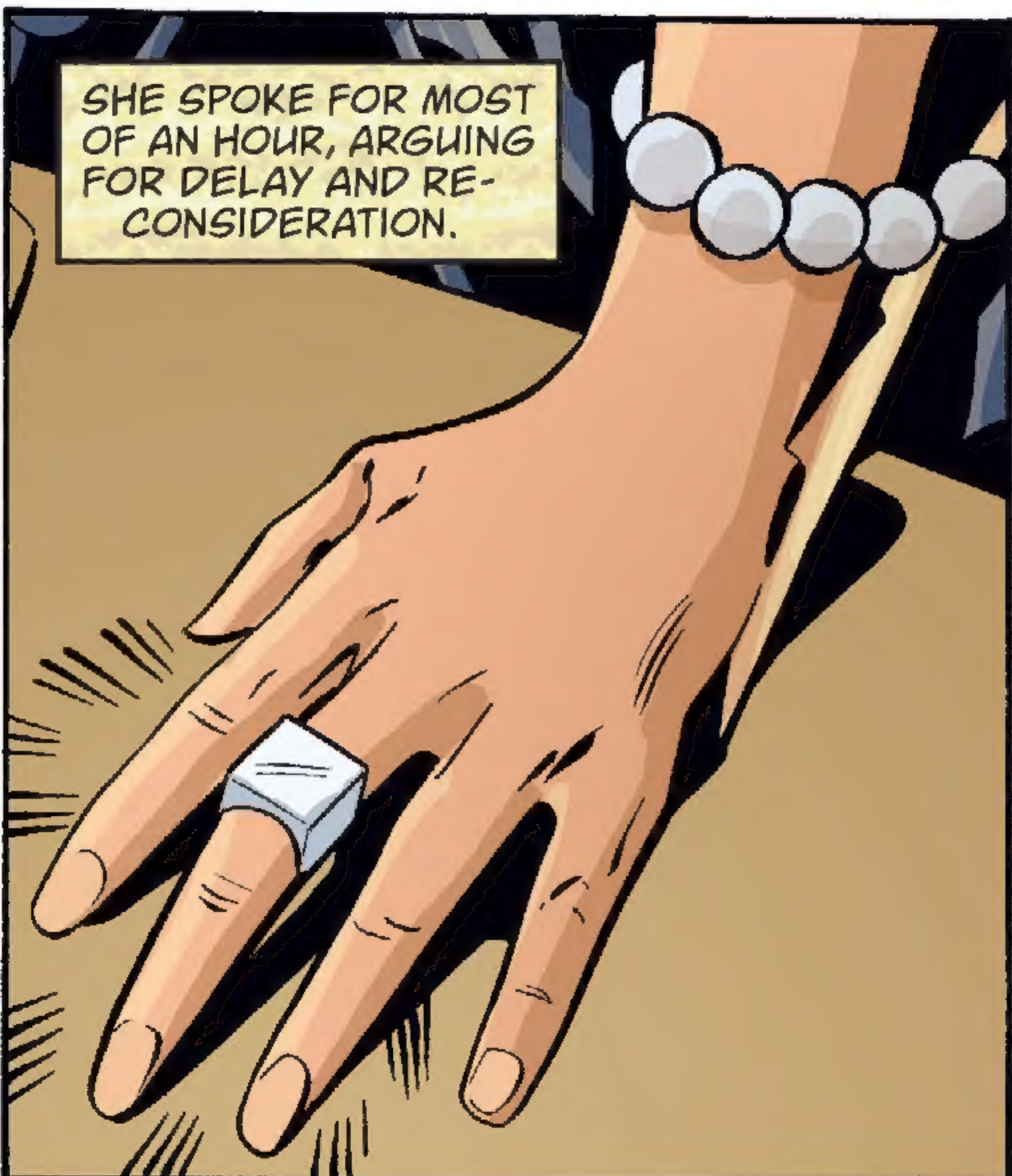
I THINK WE CAN AGREE PASSIONS ARE OF SCANT UTILITY HERE, WHERE COLD REASON AND SOUND JUDGMENT *MUST* PREVAIL.

I'M CERTAIN MISS DUGLAS HAS A REASONED ARGUMENT TO PUT FORWARD, AND I FOR ONE AM *EAGER* TO HEAR IT.



UH--YES, LET'S HEAR HER OUT. MISS DUGLAS?

AND HEAR HER THEY DID.

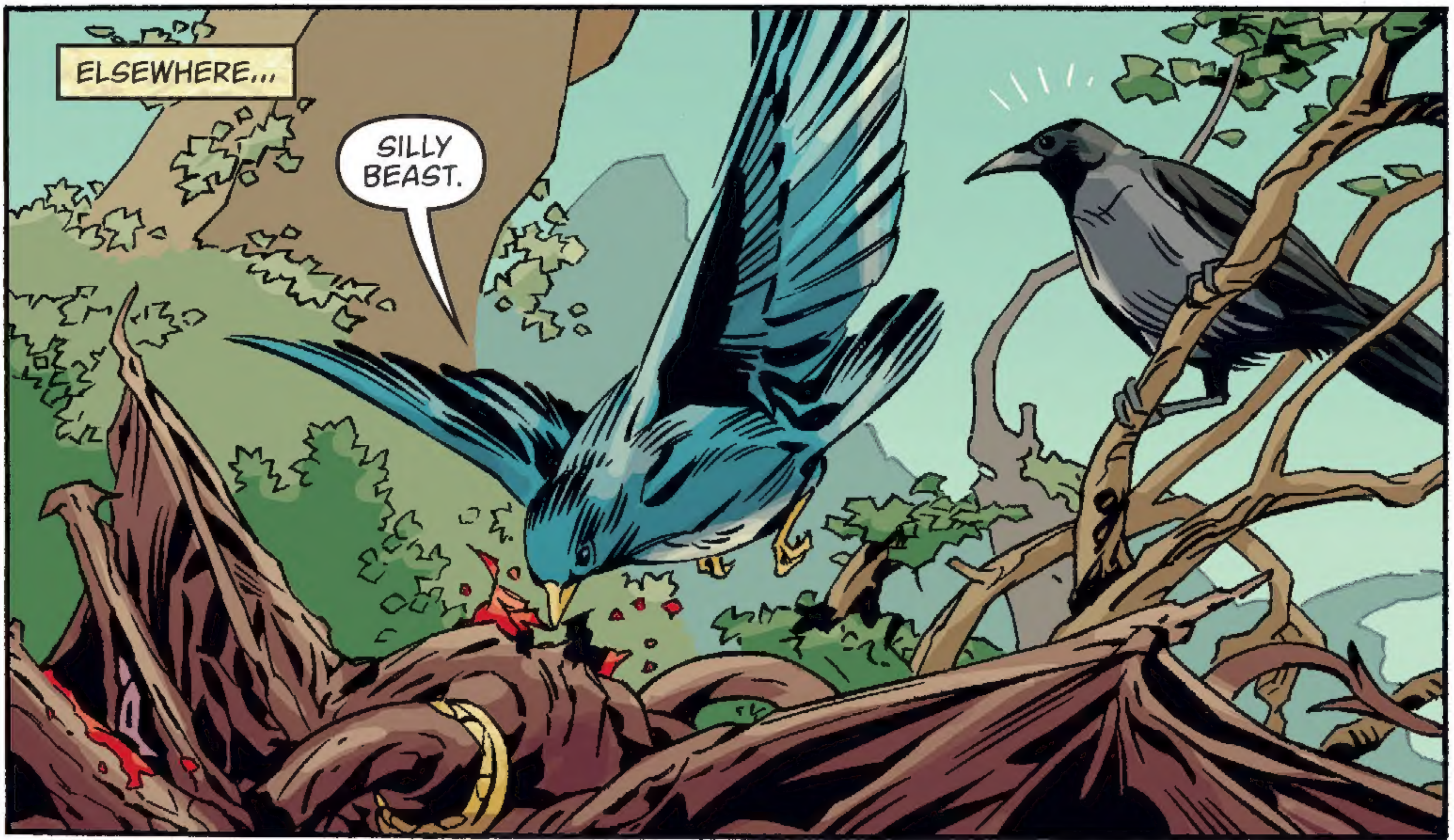


SHE SPOKE FOR MOST OF AN HOUR, ARGUING FOR DELAY AND RE-CONSIDERATION.



TO NO AVAIL.

NICE RING, LADY.



ELSEWHERE...

SILLY BEAST.



THINK YOU HAD A CHANCE AGAINST ME?

I'M A FULL-SIZED TROLL IN MY OTHER SELF.



AND MY SPONSORS RESTORED THAT VIGOR, EVEN WHEN I'M TRAPPED IN THIS DELICATE FORM.

UH...MISTER GRIMBLE, SIR? I DON'T THINK HE CAN HEAR YOU ANYMORE.



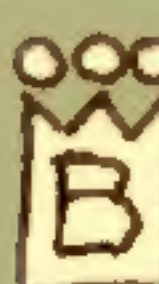
OH YES, SQUIRE CROW. I BELIEVE YOU HAD SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT MY EYES?

NO! UNLESS IT WAS TO OBSERVE HOW HANDSOME AND INTELLIGENT THEY SEEM.



BOO!

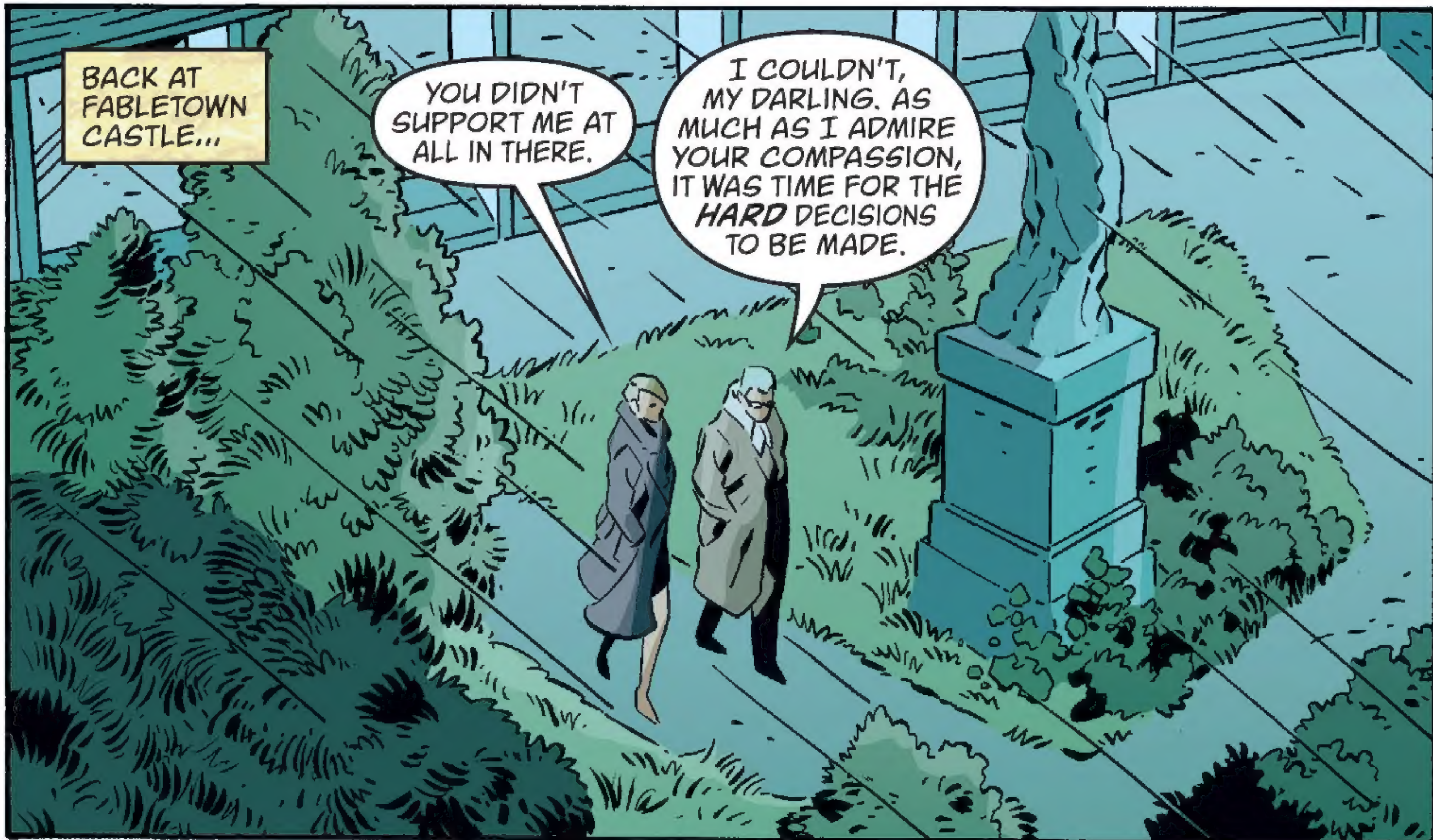
AWK!



BACK AT
FABLETOWN
CASTLE...

YOU DIDN'T
SUPPORT ME AT
ALL IN THERE.

I COULDN'T,
MY DARLING. AS
MUCH AS I ADMIRE
YOUR COMPASSION,
IT WAS TIME FOR THE
HARD DECISIONS
TO BE MADE.



I CAN'T ALLOW OUR
PRIVATE *ROMANCE*
TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC
DECISIONS.

ROMANCE?



IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK WE
WERE DOING WHEN I LET YOU PUT
YOUR *FLACCID* ANCIENT MEMBER
IN MY MOUTH?

IT WASN'T A ROMANCE,
YOU NAIVE IDIOT. IT WAS A
SEDUCTION. SO DO ME
THE COURTESY OF ACTING
SEDUCED.



I BOUGHT YOUR GODDAMN
OBEDIENCE, AND BY EVERY SHADE
BELOW, I'LL *HAVE* IT!

YOU CAN START
BY DELAYING THIS
WOLF HUNT.



NOW, GO AWAY. GET TO
WORK. YOU CAN'T COME IN FOR
YOUR AFTERNOON *ROMANCE*
SESSION TODAY. I'VE MORE
IMPORTANT THINGS
TO DO.





COME IN, LEIGH.



I'VE BEEN WAITING.

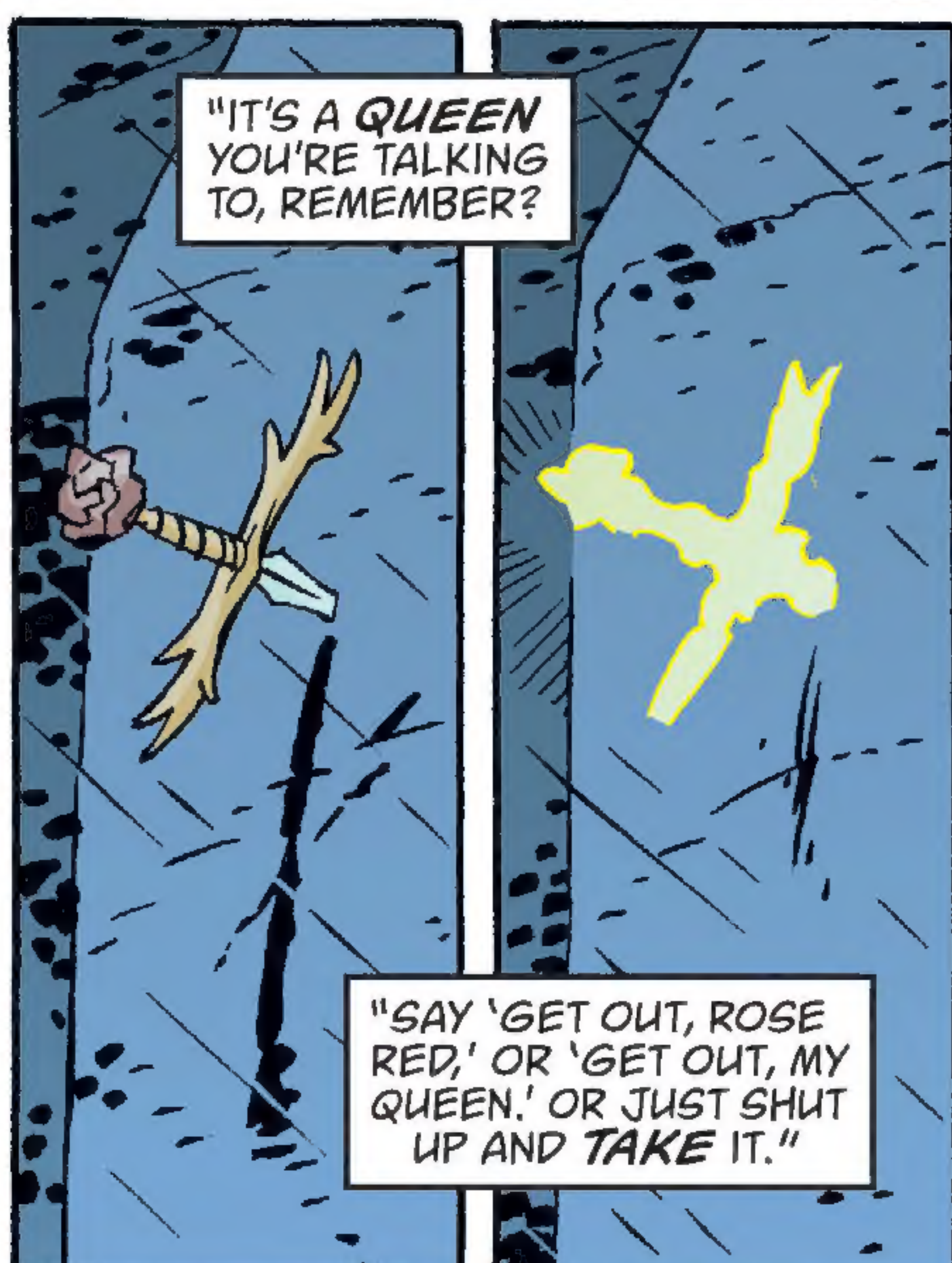
WHAT THE FUCK?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOMS?



GET OUT!

MANNERS.



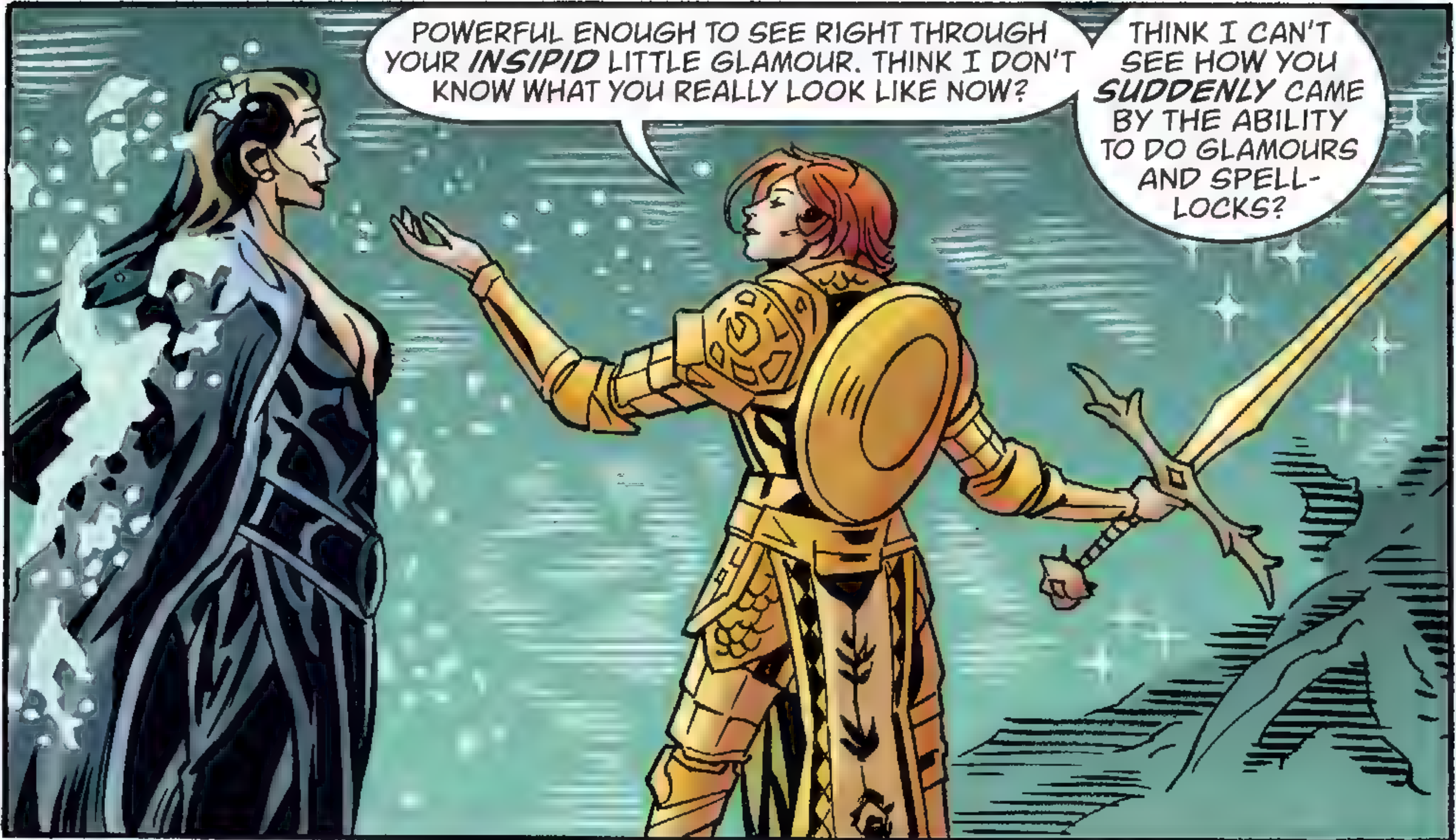
"IT'S A QUEEN YOU'RE TALKING TO, REMEMBER?"

"SAY 'GET OUT, ROSE RED,' OR 'GET OUT, MY QUEEN.' OR JUST SHUT UP AND TAKE IT."



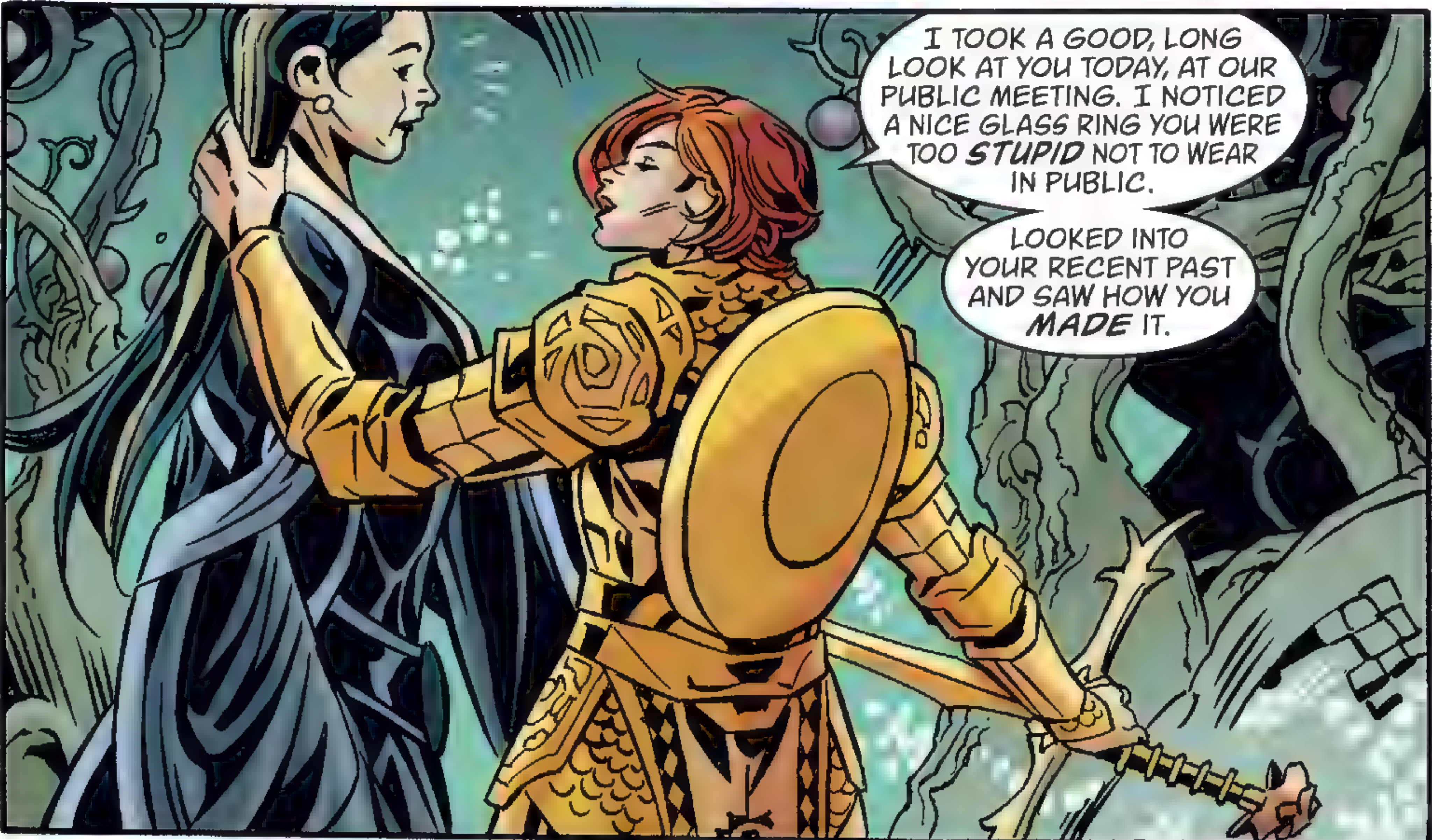
WHY ARE YOU HERE? HOW DID YOU GET PAST MY SPELL-LOCKS?

I'M POWERFUL NOW IN SO MANY INTERESTING WAYS.



POWERFUL ENOUGH TO SEE RIGHT THROUGH YOUR *INSIPID* LITTLE GLAMOUR. THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY LOOK LIKE NOW?

THINK I CAN'T SEE HOW YOU *SUDDENLY* CAME BY THE ABILITY TO DO GLAMOURS AND SPELL-LOCKS?



I TOOK A GOOD, LONG LOOK AT YOU TODAY, AT OUR PUBLIC MEETING. I NOTICED A NICE GLASS RING YOU WERE TOO *STUPID* NOT TO WEAR IN PUBLIC.

LOOKED INTO YOUR RECENT PAST AND SAW HOW YOU *MADE* IT.



WHAT YOU'VE BEEN *DOING* WITH IT.

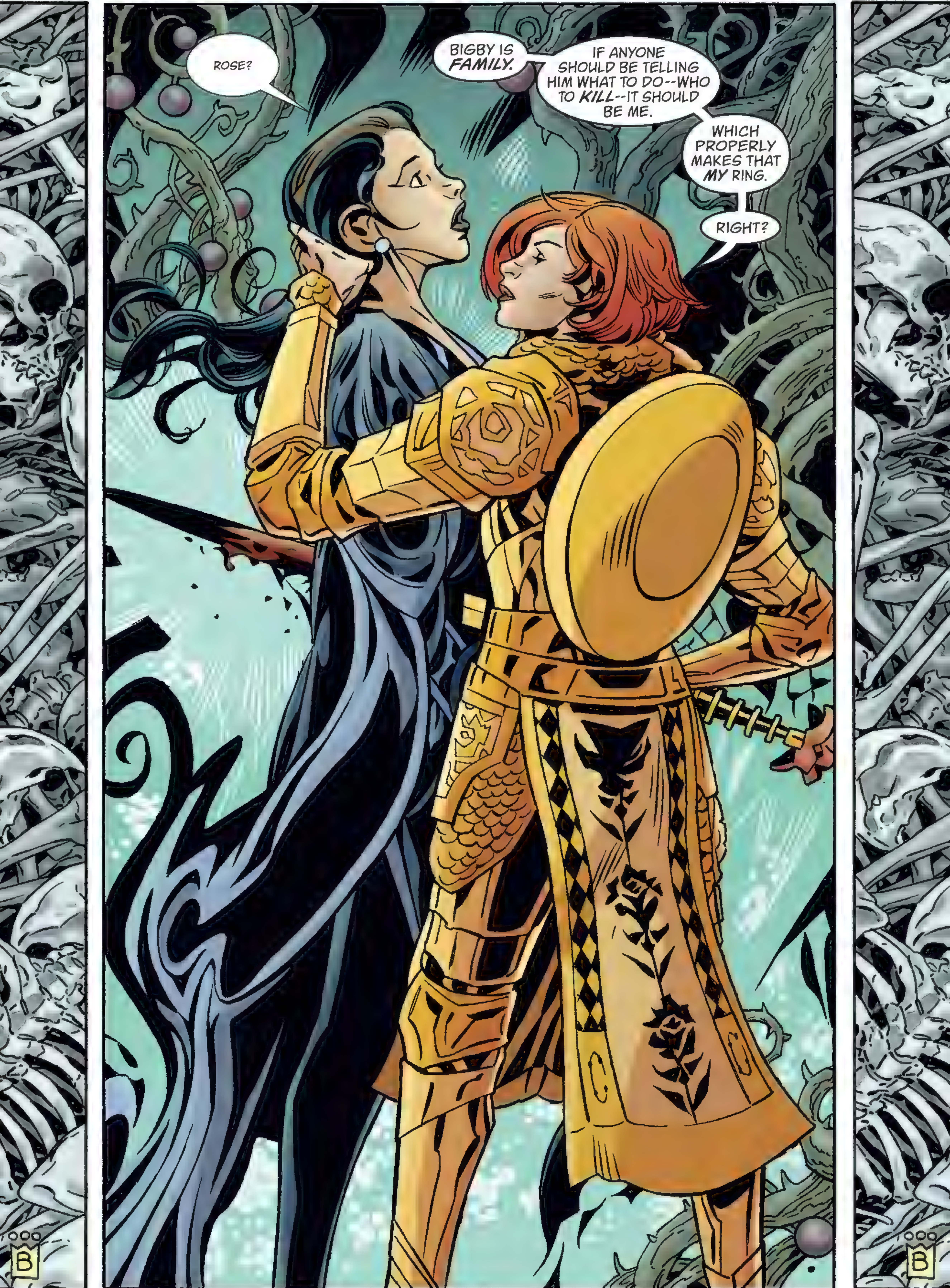
DON'T...



...DON'T DO THIS.

YOU DID *BAD*.

DIRTY LITTLE GIRL.



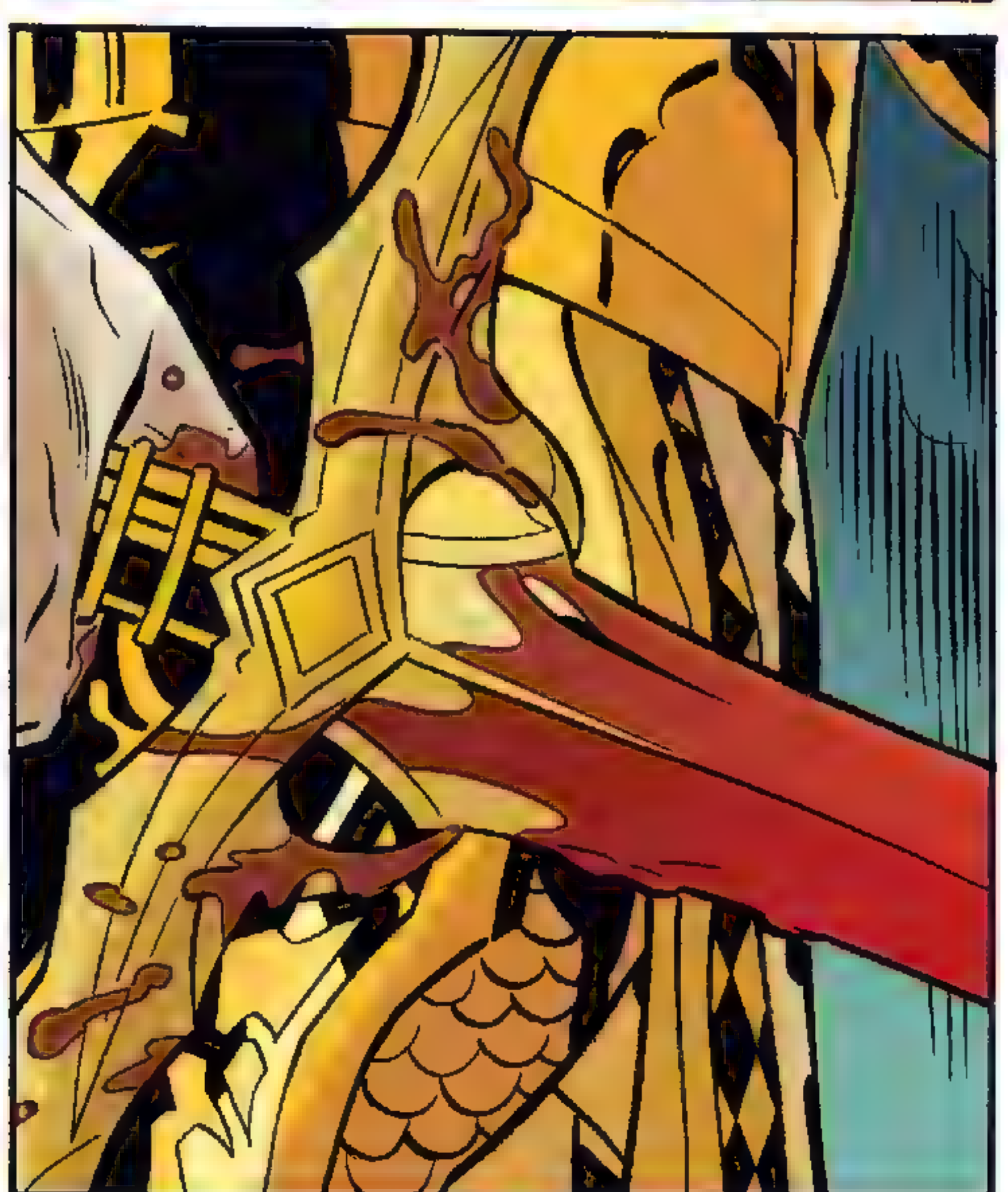
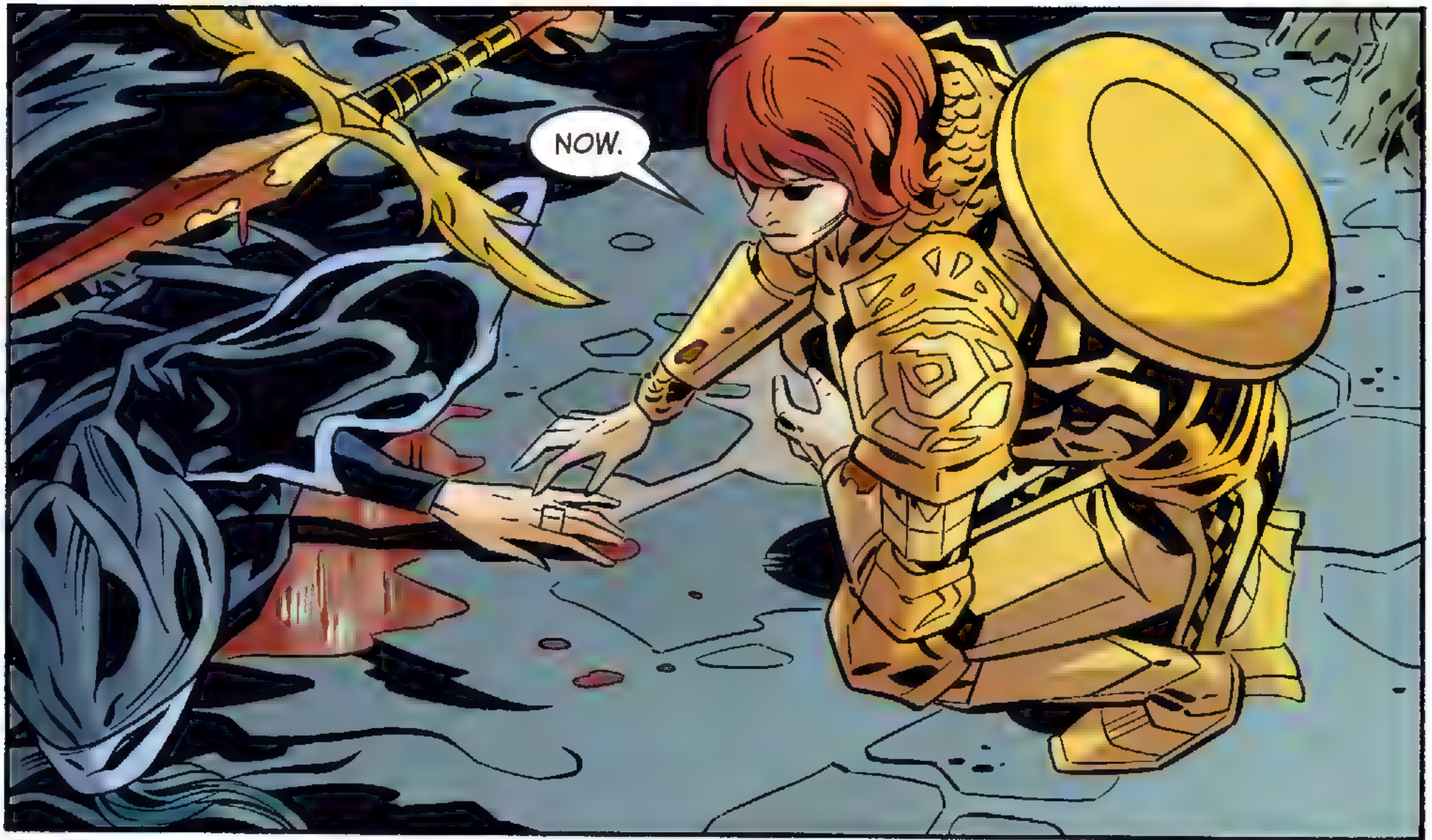
ROSE?

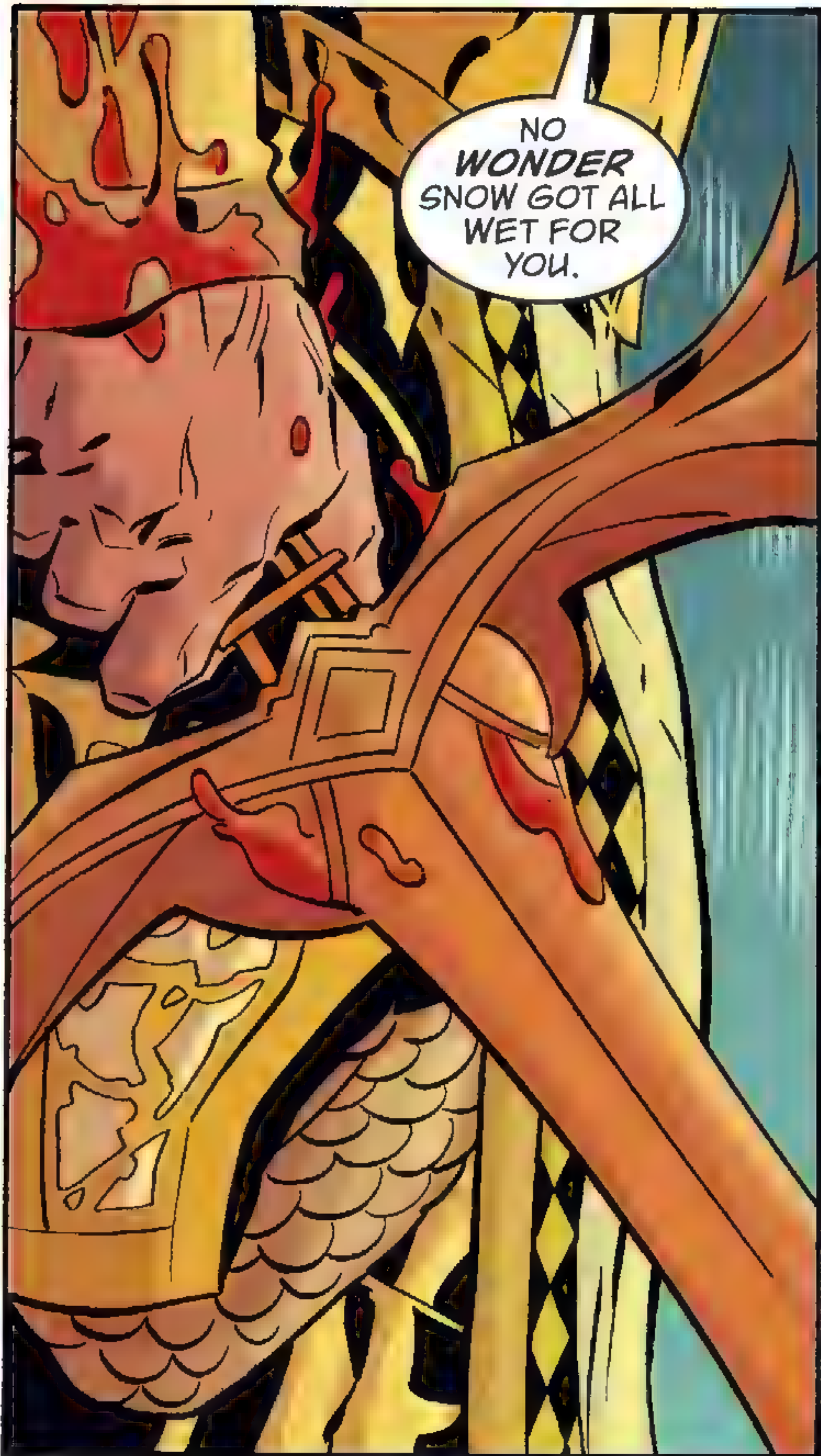
BIGBY IS FAMILY.

IF ANYONE SHOULD BE TELLING HIM WHAT TO DO--WHO TO KILL--IT SHOULD BE ME.

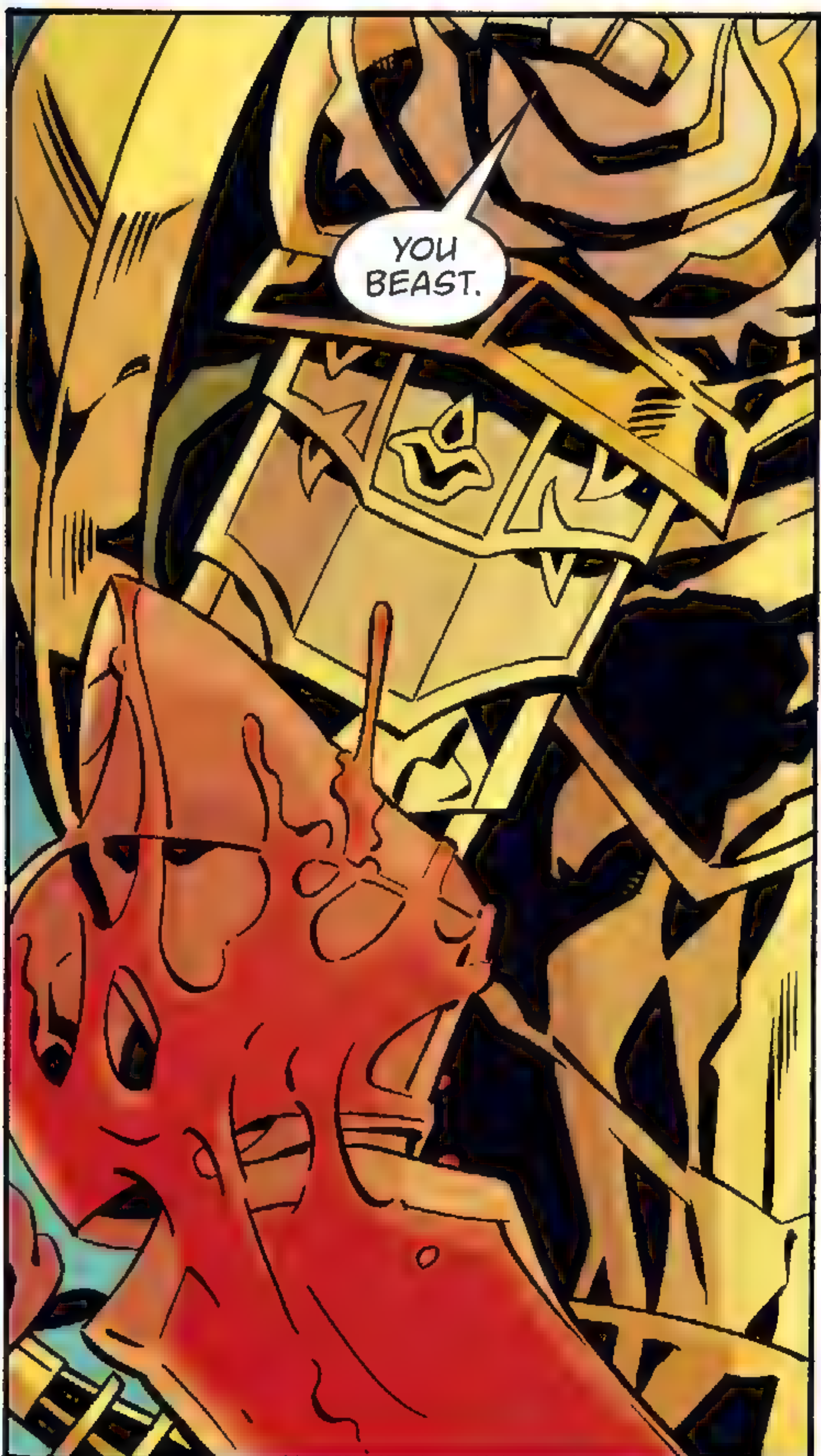
WHICH PROPERLY MAKES THAT MY RING.

RIGHT?

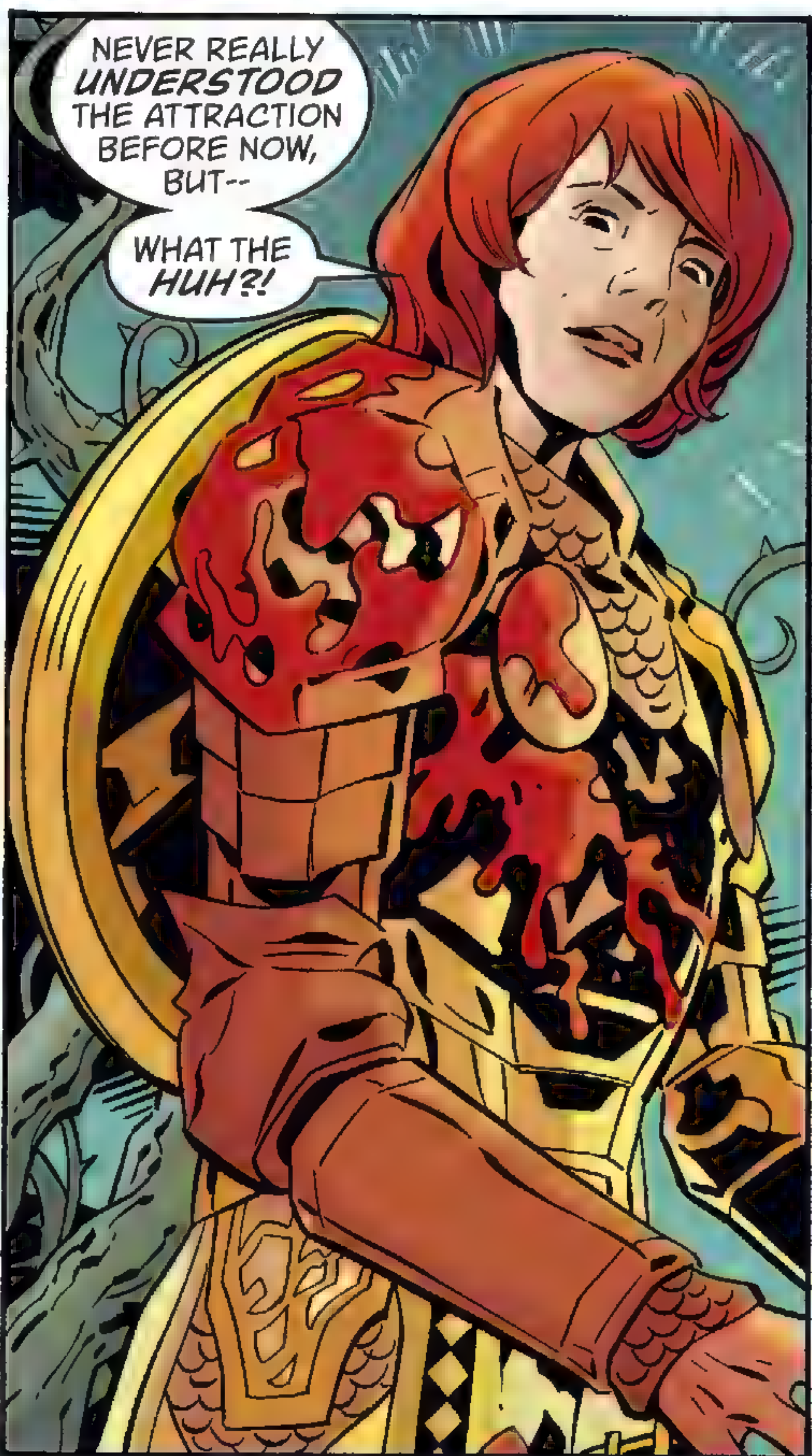




NO
WONDER
SNOW GOT ALL
WET FOR
YOU.



YOU
BEAST.



NEVER REALLY
UNDERSTOOD
THE ATTRACTION
BEFORE NOW,
BUT--

WHAT THE
HUH?!



WHAT
NOW?

IT'S WHAT
YOU WANTED,
ISN'T IT?

WHAT
YOU ALWAYS
HOPED
FOR?

THE
CULMINATION
OF ALL YOUR
DREAMS.





WHAT YOU WANTED.

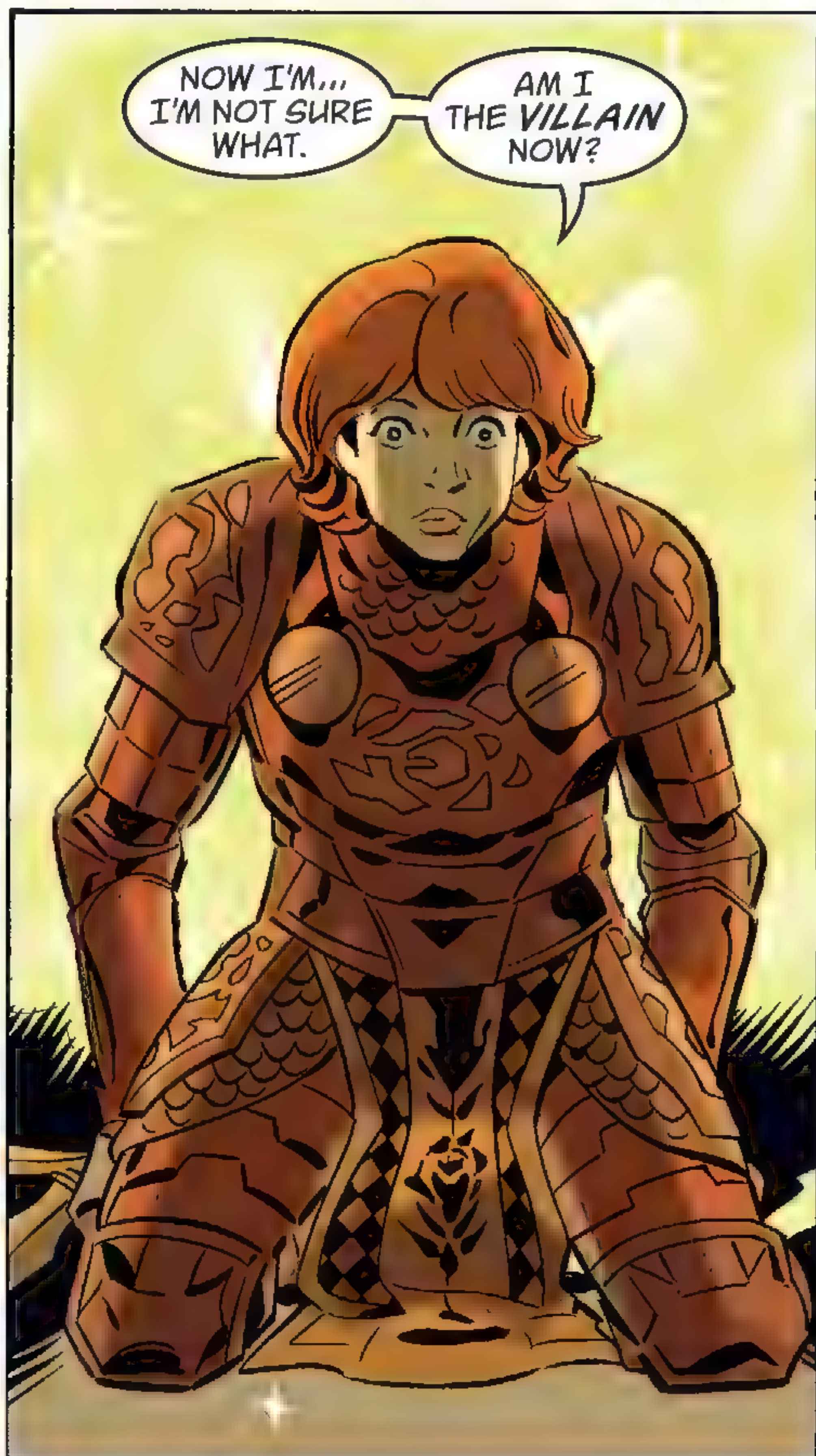
WHAT YOU WANTED.

WHAT YOU WANTED.

WHAT YOU WANTED.

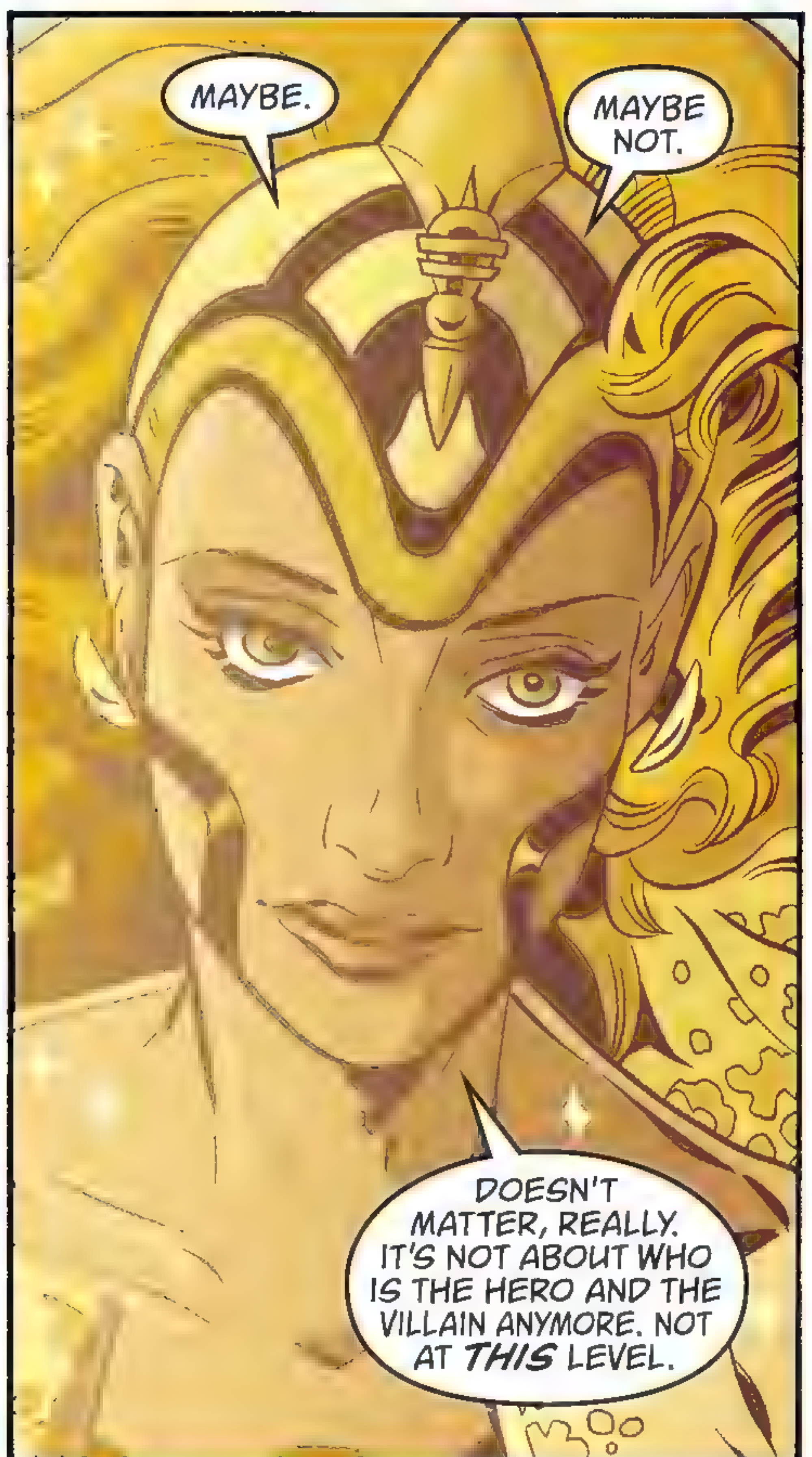
BUT THIS ISN'T--

I WAS GOLDEN AND BRIGHT!



NOW I'M... I'M NOT SURE WHAT.

AM I THE VILLAIN NOW?



MAYBE.

MAYBE NOT.

DOESN'T MATTER, REALLY. IT'S NOT ABOUT WHO IS THE HERO AND THE VILLAIN ANYMORE. NOT AT THIS LEVEL.



IT'S ABOUT WHO WILL BE THE ONE LEFT **DEAD** AND WHO WILL BE DRENCHED IN **BLOOD**.



THE MOST POWERFUL AND MAGICAL **BLOOD** OF YOUR OWN SISTER.



AND NOW WE'RE CERTAIN YOU WILL WIN THE TONTINE. THE **ETERNAL** GENERATIONAL STRUGGLE.

CONGRATULATIONS.



I HAD HOPES IT COULD BE AVOIDED THIS CYCLE, BUT THEN I ALWAYS FALL PREY TO HOPE OVER REASON.

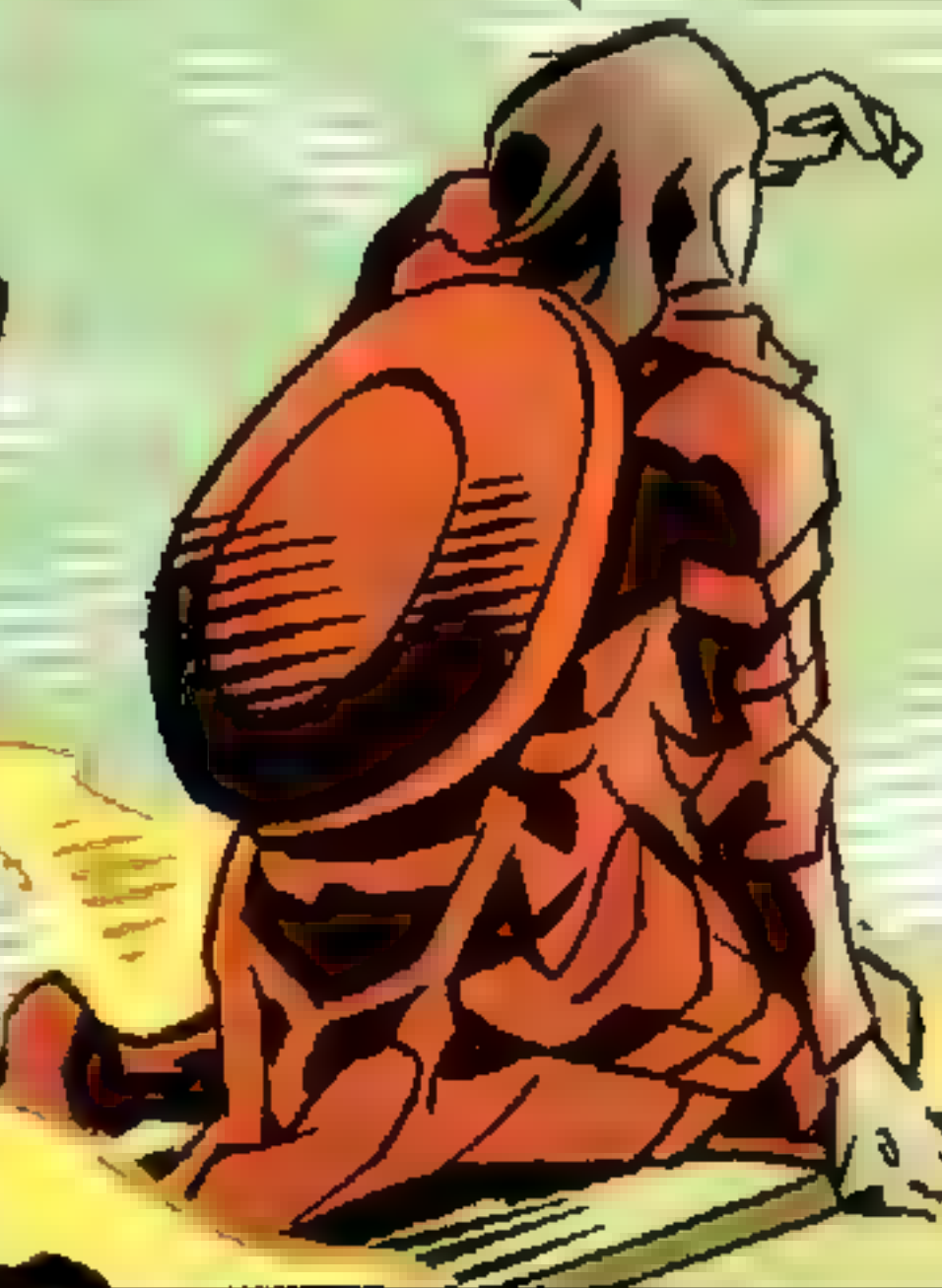
MY ONE **FATAL** FLAW.



I'M GOING TO **KILL SNOW**? SERIOUSLY?

NO ESCAPE?

NO WAY TO GET OUT OF IT?

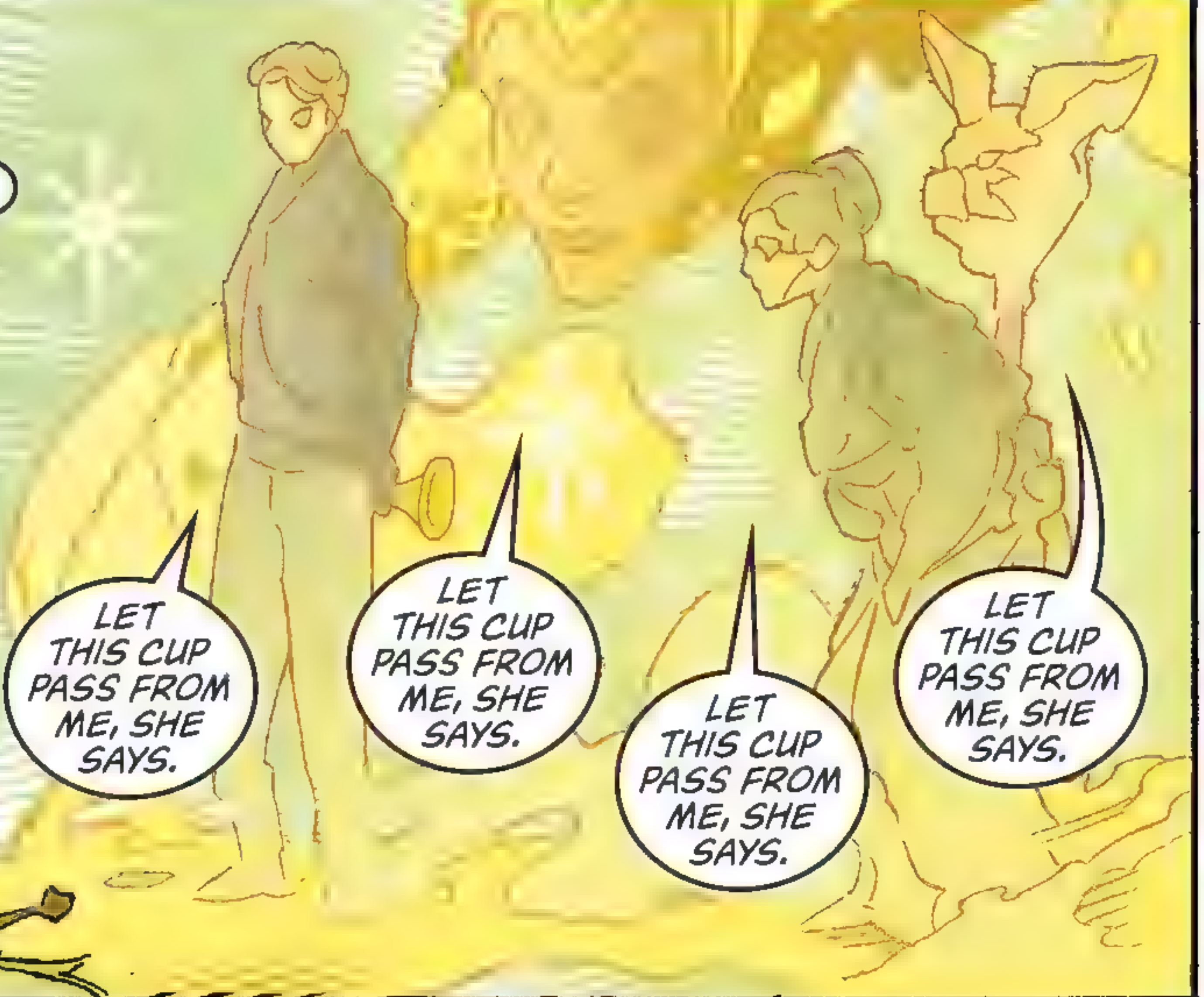


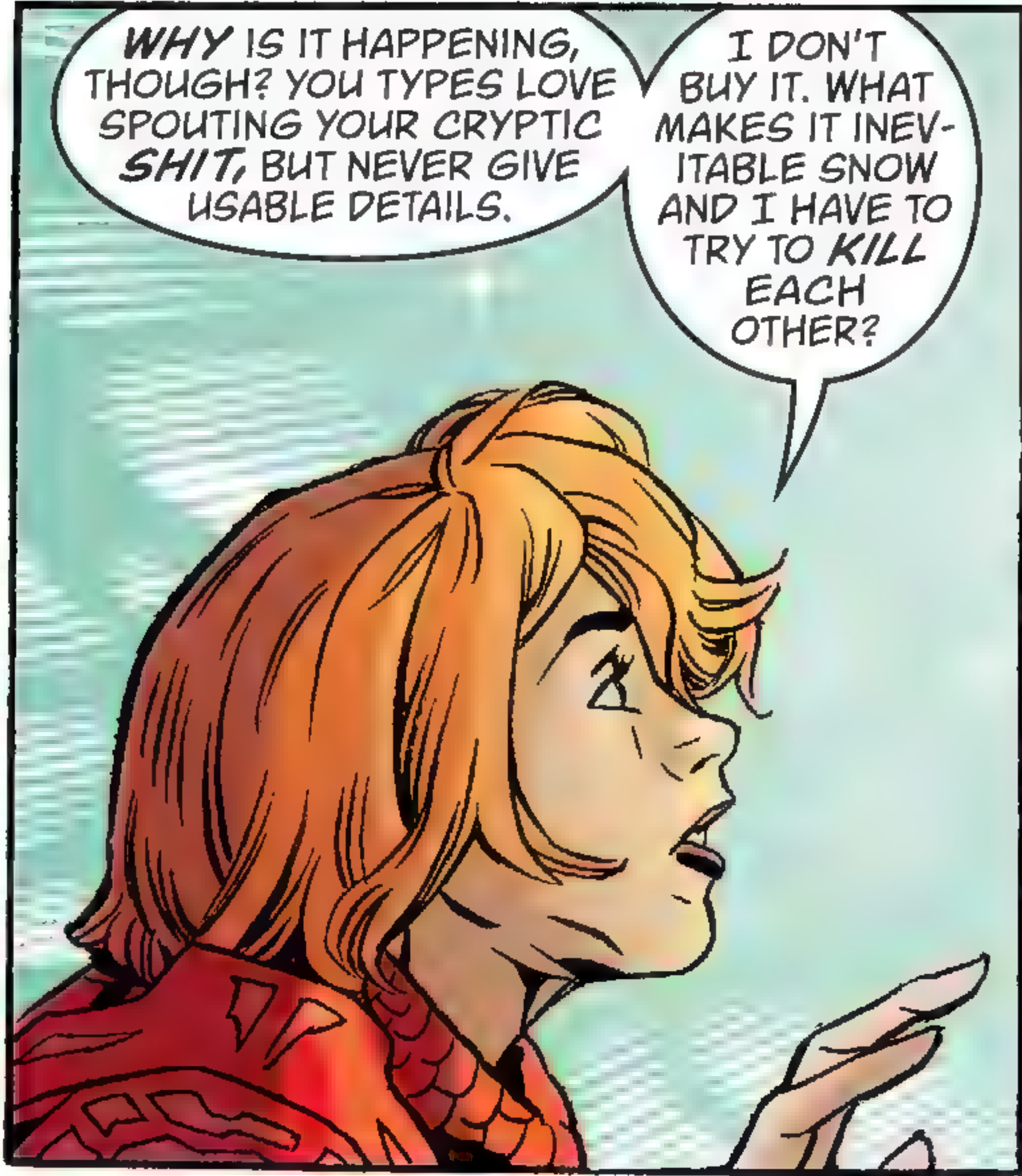
LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME, SHE SAYS.

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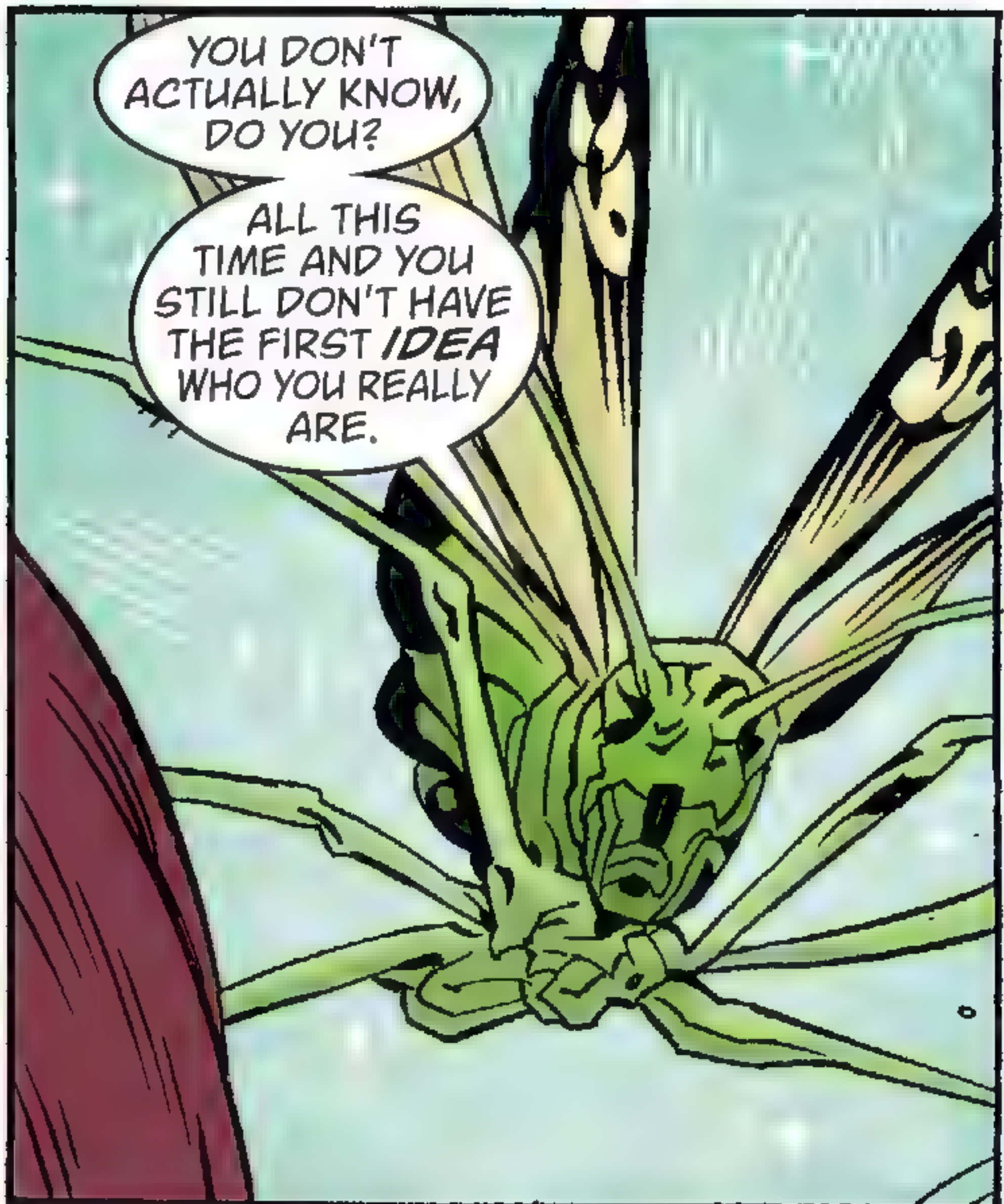
LET THIS CUP PASS FROM ME, SHE SAYS.





WHY IS IT HAPPENING, THOUGH? YOU TYPES LOVE SPOUTING YOUR CRYPTIC SHIT, BUT NEVER GIVE USABLE DETAILS.

I DON'T BUY IT. WHAT MAKES IT INEVITABLE SNOW AND I HAVE TO TRY TO KILL EACH OTHER?



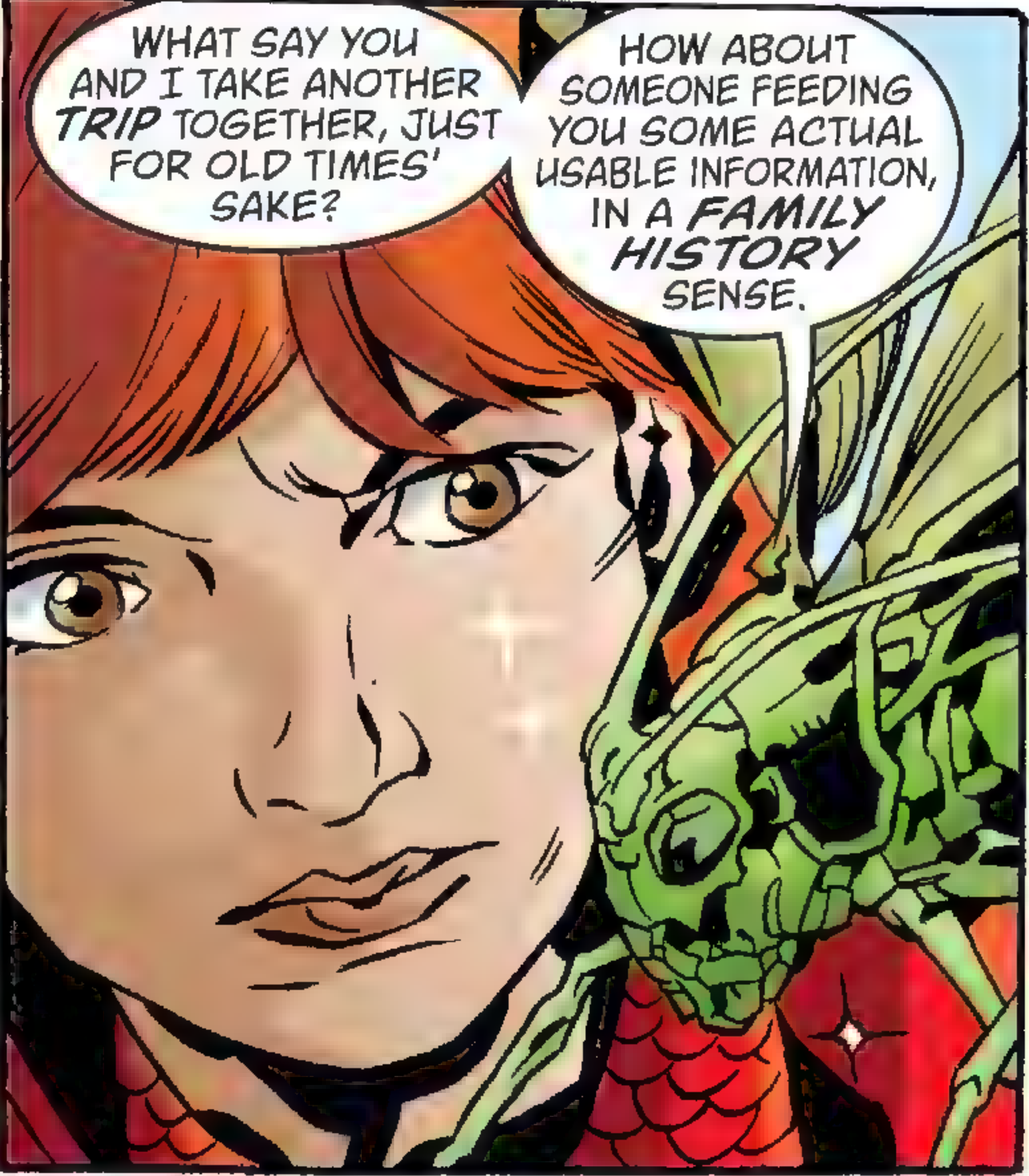
YOU DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW, DO YOU?

ALL THIS TIME AND YOU STILL DON'T HAVE THE FIRST IDEA WHO YOU REALLY ARE.



DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER TELL YOU ANYTHING?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT?



WHAT SAY YOU AND I TAKE ANOTHER TRIP TOGETHER, JUST FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE?

HOW ABOUT SOMEONE FEEDING YOU SOME ACTUAL USABLE INFORMATION, IN A FAMILY HISTORY SENSE.



NO CRYPTIC BULL-PUCKY. NO VAGUE AMBIGUITIES.

A FULL SEVEN-COURSE MEAL OF ANSWERS.





WHERE ARE WE?

IT'S CHANGED A LOT SINCE YOU LAST SAW IT, HUH?

WE'RE HOME, SWEETIE. YOUR HOME.

SPECIFICALLY, YOUR OLD CHILDHOOD COTTAGE IN THE WOODS.

EXCEPT-- Y'KNOW--THOMAS WOLFE WAS RIGHT.

YOU CAN'T ACTUALLY GO HOME AGAIN.

THE TOXIC DREAM

Being the last story of Prince Charming, of his latest wife, and a few other Fables.

Bill Willingham
writer/creator

Jae Lee
artist

June Chung
colors

Todd Klein
letters

Rowena Yow
assoc. ed.

Shelly Bond
editor



YEARS PASS. NO ONE KNOWS WHICH OLD EMPIRE WORLD PRINCE CHARMING IS LIKELY TO SHOW UP IN FROM ONE DAY TO THE NEXT.

OUR BIRD ALLIES KEEP THEIR **DISTANCE**, KEEP THE FLEET IN SIGHT AT ALL TIMES AND REPORT IN.

SO WE'LL ALWAYS KNOW **WHERE** THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY'RE BOUND.

REMEMBER, ACCURATE INTELLIGENCE AND COMMUNICATION ARE **ALWAYS** MORE IMPORTANT THAN FIREPOWER.



BUT FIRE-POWER HAS ITS MOMENTS.

THE LAUNCHER, PLEASE, ROLAND?



WHEN WE HAVE A DOZEN OR MORE TRAINED **ROCKET** TEAMS, ALL LAUNCHERS MUST BE FIRED AS **CLOSE** TO SIMULTANEOUSLY AS IS POSSIBLE.



SHE'S HIT!

AND ALREADY FALLING. WOODEN SHIPS BURN QUICKLY.

ONE INCENDIARY ROCKET KILLS ONE OF THEIR MAIN BATTLE CRUISERS. THAT'S WHAT'S KNOWN AS THE "NICE PRICE."



ONE SHOT ONLY, HIT OR MISS, THEN YOU RELOCATE.

FIND COVER. USE YOUR PRESELECTED ESCAPE ROUTE.

STAY UNDERGROUND, DOWN *DEEP*, UNTIL THE NEXT SCHEDULED RENDEZVOUS.



QUESTIONS?

ONE COMES TO MIND.

THIS IS SINBAD'S FLEET, RIGHT?



WASN'T HE YOUR PAL?

AND OUR ALLY IN THE GREAT WAR?

YES, BOO BEAR. EXCELLENT QUESTION.

HE WAS.



SINBAD WAS, WITHOUT QUESTION, THE BEST FRIEND I'VE EVER HAD, AND THE BRAVEST MAN I'LL EVER KNOW.



AND I LOVE HIM. ALWAYS WILL, I SUSPECT.

BUT GOOD FABLES DIED UNDER MY LEADERSHIP, PUTTING AN END TO THE PREVIOUS EMPIRE.



ANYONE WHO THINKS I'D EVER LET A NEW EMPIRE TAKE ITS PLACE IS DREAMING.



NOW, LET'S DISCUSS RESUPPLY AND OTHER MATTERS OF GUERRILLA LOGISTICS.

The End

DESKTOP THE KITCHEN

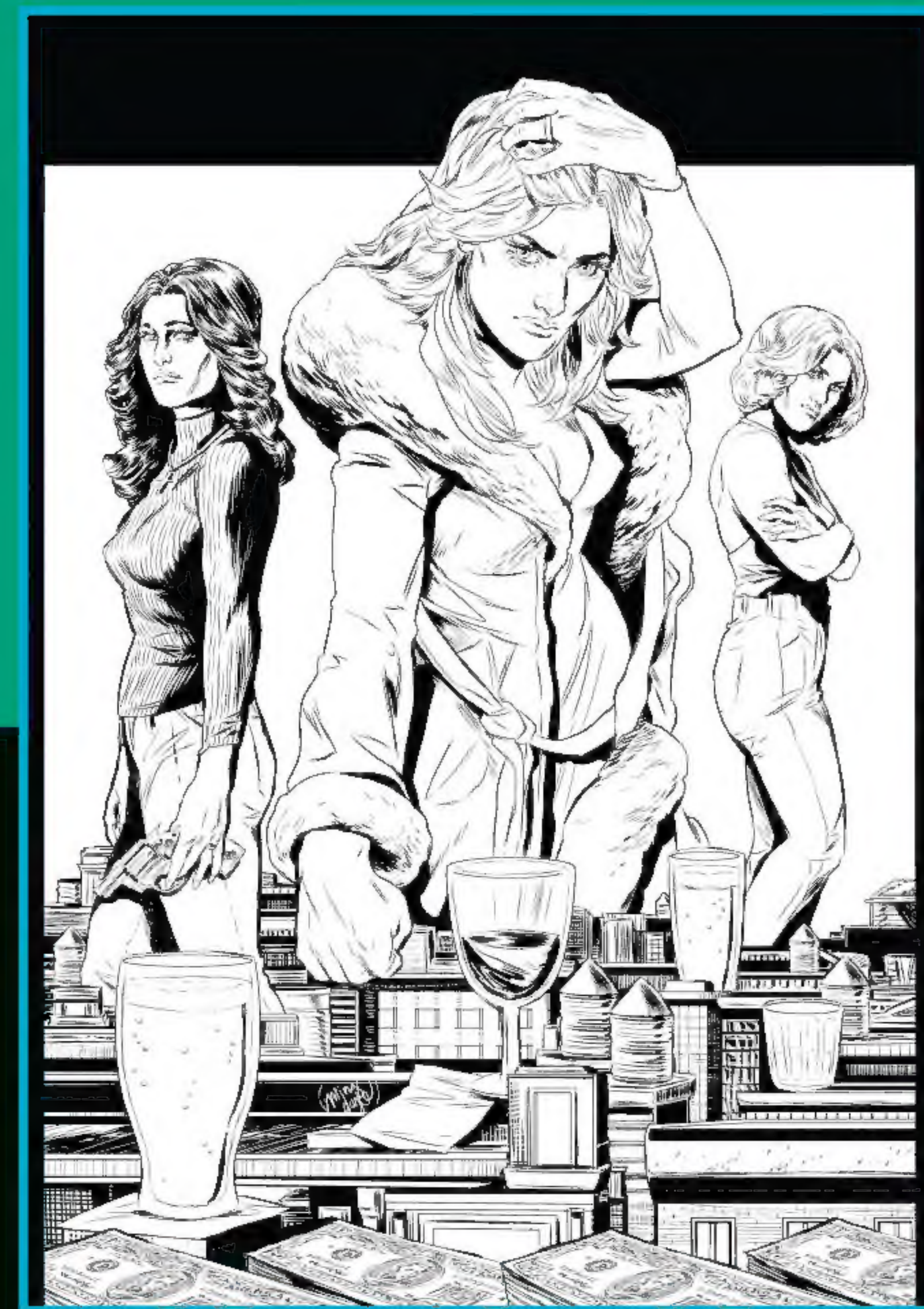
Artist Ming Doyle takes us down the dark, seedy alleyways of VERTIGO's newest series, THE KITCHEN, in stores NOVEMBER 12th.

A. Even though my comics process is entirely digital, I still love the act of inking. By using a combination of Manga Studio, Photoshop, and stock and custom brushes, I'm able to make marks that capture a lot of grit and texture and are true to my traditional ink work.

I start by laying down fairly rough thumbnails to get a basic idea of how I want the page to read and what key details I want to include. Then I simply lower the opacity and jump straight to the finished line work on a new layer. All of my final drawing decisions are made in this stage, and it's why I've never been able to work with an inker. For me, the inking is the art.



B. This started out as a possible variant cover, but it works well enough as a stand-alone character study. Kath's wedding dress design is the result of hours of Pinterest-based retro research. I'm just lucky the "Polyester Bride" look remains in vogue with a certain discerning crowd!



"For me, the inking is the art."

- Ming Doyle, Artist



C. Usually, the only time I'm able to color my own work is for illustration gigs or on covers. I've been fortunate enough to work with some great colorists, particularly my longtime collaborator Jordie Bellaire, who really knows how to handle my dense inks! Still, it's fun to see a piece from start to finish, and I loved the opportunity to go a little symbolic with our protagonists on this variant cover.



D. This was my very first drawing of the main cast, used as part of our pitch. Everyone's look grew and changed a bit, but I still think these baby ideas are cute! Well, maybe aside from Tommy, who our writer, Ollie Masters, told me should resemble Nick Cave. He definitely looks like a Bad Seed!

- Ming Doyle, Artist



GRAPHIC CONTENT

MAGENTA BLACK
YELLOW CYAN

The thing I love most about writing is losing myself in another place and time.

New York City in the '70s, back when Times Square was full of peep shows, pimps and prostitutes, that deranged killer Son of Sam was still stalking its streets, the '77 blackout proved just how close to anarchy the city really was, and Hell's Kitchen (that infamous hub of Irish criminals) was more than living up to its name...

This was a world I wanted to explore, in all its dangerous, exciting, gritty, dirty glory.



Becky Cloonan, editor Will Dennis and associate editor Greg Lockard (damn, how the hell did I get such a great and talented group of people to work with?) we would send each other countless amounts of '70s New York reference photos. Drug dealers, seedy nightclubs, grimy streets, gangsters, porn shops, subway train graffiti and CBGB punks filled our inboxes.

As I mentally walked the streets I saw in these photos, I lost myself in this world.

And c'mon, don't tell me you don't want to as well.



it in the predominantly male world of violent organized crime, and they soon learn that they can only live on their husbands' name for so long. Sooner or later they're going to need to make their own name out on the streets.

When I started working on THE KITCHEN with artist Ming Doyle, colorist Jordie Bellaire, cover artist

Masters

- Ollie Masters, Writer



Written by Ollie Masters
Art by Ming Doyle
Covers by Becky Cloonan

In stores November 12th



In THE KITCHEN we see '70s NYC through the eyes of three Hell's Kitchen Irish-American housewives (Kath, Raven and Angie) as they take over organized crime on the streets, filling in the void that's left when their gangster husbands get sent to prison.

They've got it all stacked against them. Three women trying to make

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